Week ending November 26 1955 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

JOHN BULL

EXTRA: BOOK CONDENSATION

'NOTHING TO LOSE': Colin John's vivid story of his

FIVE YEARS IN THE FOREIGN LEGION

72 PAGES THIS WEEK

THE SECRETS OF DOMINICI

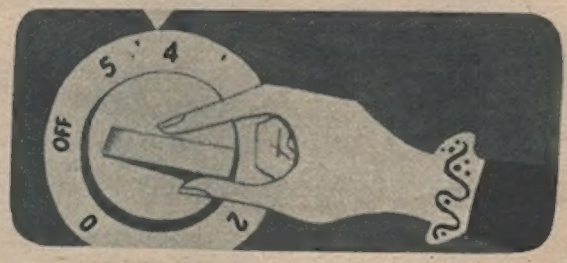
'FRENCH LEAVE' by P. G. WODEHOUSE

CAN WE CONTROL THE ATOM BOMB?

Of course it's quick -it's electric!

There's many a time in the kitchen when every second counts. And a modern electric cooker *never* wastes a woman's time, for electric cooking's really quick. There are super-speed radiant boiling plates which reach full cooking heat in a matter of seconds — ideal for warming the milk for coffee or doing the scrambled eggs for breakfast.

When it comes to superb cooking you must have perfect heat control. That's where electric cookers really score. There's no guesswork—you simply set the dial to the exact heat you want. And the thermostat control on the electric oven is wonderful for baking and roasts.



An electric cooker is so easy to keep clean. There's neither grime nor moisture in electric heat. All the cooker surfaces are smooth, too — a quick wipe with a damp cloth and they sparkle. The whole kitchen stays clean with an electric cooker. Decorate the kitchen just as you like — paintwork, distemper and even wallpaper stay fresh for years.

Just add up all the advantages of an electric cooker: superb *quick* cooking; easy *exact* control; a *clean* kitchen; safety. There's nothing to beat an electric cooker!

The electric cooker is one of the
Four Foundations of Modern Living

Call in at your Electricity Service Centre **. . . where you can see a wide variety of modern electric cookers and get helpful advice.**

Issued by the Electrical Development Association

EDITORIAL

The myth about women

AN injustice to women needs putting right. It is the delusion of all men who drive motor vehicles that all women drivers are incompetent, unreliable and therefore dangerous.

When a screech of brakes announces that another accident has just been averted, nearby men drivers say superciliously: "Another woman driver, I suppose."

The woman who knocks down her garage doors, looks ahead while reversing, and studies her make-up in the driving mirror is a favourite subject for jokes—and will always remain a favourite (see page 65).

NONE of these slanders and libels has any proven basis in fact whatsoever, and only a lack of comparative statistics in this country has kept them alive. The available expert evidence is that, in proportion to their numbers, women are safer drivers than men and cause fewer accidents.

MISS DENISE McCANN
"... *just a myth*"

Official British statistics make no distinction between the sexes. Not since 1937, when it is estimated that about fifteen per cent of driving licences were held by women, has it been possible to make a direct comparison. In that year, women were concerned in only ten per cent of 266,087 accidents, and in only twenty per cent of the 8,508 fatal accidents.

More up-to-date figures come from America. In Connecticut, women hold twenty per cent of the licences but cause only 9.6 per cent of accidents. In Columbia they hold fifteen per cent of licences and cause only six per cent of non-fatal accidents and 2.4 per cent of fatal ones.

Even if those figures are adjusted to allow for the greater mileages probably driven by men, the implications are clear. Women do not drive in such a way as to cause so many *serious* smashes.

MISS DENISE MCCANN, managing director of a leading school of motoring that has trained more than a million successful entrants for the driving test, gives an expert British view.

"Half of those successes," says Miss McCann, "have been women. Our experience shows that women are often more conscientious pupils than men. Generally speaking, they take the same number of hours to pass the test, and our instructors agree that they are more careful in studying the Highway Code. The myth of the woman driver is just a myth. She is every bit as good as a man."

The moral is clear. More women drivers, in proportion to men, will make our roads safer and more civilized. And more women drivers of commercial and industrial vehicles would be an excellent thing—if only the old, baseless male prejudices against them could be forgotten.

ON OTHER PAGES

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Book Condensation

NOTHING TO LOSE — *by Colin John* — 49-56

FREE SPEECH: 4, 6, 10. THIS WEEK'S COVER: 6. IT'S THE CUSTOM: 48

"There's nothing like a *black* car", say the Old School.

"A metallic grey job never shows the dirt!", retorts the modern salesman. "Fire-engine red", sighs the sports-car enthusiast (absent-mindedly changing down with the bowl of his pipe). What *are* the popular colours?

Colourful types

To find out, I.C.I.'s Paints Division — leading suppliers of paint finishes to the British motor industry — carry out every year a survey of all British cars at the Earls Court Motor Show. So far, despite the coming of pastel and metallic shades, black still remains favourite. Assessing trends in public taste is only one facet of Paints Division's service to the motor industry — service that dates from the early days of mass-production.

It was I.C.I.'s introduction of the quick-drying cellulose finishes, for example, that reduced the time taken to paint cars from 12 days to 12 hours. Today, Paints Division continues the search for better finishes, primers, and undercoats, and its products are protecting and decorating not only motor vehicles all over the world, but also ships, aircraft and many other products — as well as the factories and homes where people work and live.

Thus, and in a thousand kindred ways, I.C.I.'s research and production are serving the Nation.

ICI

Bacon is delicious

– and in so many different ways!

Bacon isn't just one dish. It's hundreds. All of them delicious. And all of them so easy to cook. Bacon and eggs, bacon and tomatoes, bacon and sausage are special favourites, of course. But bacon is delicious with practically everything.

BACON FOR BREAKFAST — that goes without saying. Bacon gives you stored-up energy that keeps you going all morning. Ounce for ounce, it has more food energy than eggs, bread, milk, cereals, jam, fish, or any other meat. That's why children need a good hot bacon breakfast before they go off to school. But, of course, bacon makes a grand meal *any* time.

GET YOUR FREE COPIES of the new bacon leaflets, featuring delicious ways to enjoy bacon. Write to Bacon Information Council, 3 Brook House, Park Lane, London, W.1 enclosing 1½d. stamp.

TRY THIS BACON & EGG PIE
Economical! Delicious!

8-10 oz. shortcrust pastry
6 rashers lean bacon
2 eggs
Salt and pepper

Make pastry, cut in 2 pieces, roll out each piece to fit an 8" pie plate. Line plate with one piece. Cut bacon in small pieces, mix with beaten eggs and seasoning. Pour on to lined plate, damp round edge of pastry, cover with the other piece. Bake in a moderately hot oven until brown (30-40 minutes). Serves 4 people.

ENJOY BACON TODAY AND EVERY DAY

JOHN BULL 189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1
NOV. 26 1955 VOL. 98 NO. 2578 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

Stop the bad habit of tipping

ONE of the most difficult things to do—harder than stopping smoking, I have found—is to stop tipping. But I feel we should all make an effort, for tipping is humiliating, has become a habit instead of a just reward, and is economically unsound.

When I began my no-tips campaign, I had to fight a powerful urge to tip the porter and the taximan, because it was the easy way out and gave me a sneaking sense of superiority; also I had to harden my heart against the growls of barmen behind my back, and the snubs of waitresses.

On the other hand, my barber and I have become twice as friendly since I stopped tipping him. I no longer have to patronize a man who owns a car twice as big as mine.—P. MACEY, Southport.

Shoestring

WHEN I buy shoes for my two small sons the price increases as the size grows bigger. This is not the case with adults' shoes. Why the discrimination?—MRS. J. CLARE, Wallasey, Cheshire.

"Much larger quantities of adult shoes in particular sizes are made, which cuts down overheads," says a manufacturer. "If a standard price was fixed for all children's shoes, this would be unfair on the parents of very small children."

A book condensation complete in this issue

NOTHING TO LOSE

Colin John's dramatic account of his life in the Foreign Legion

begins on page 49

Rome Suffered Too

PURCHASE tax directly promotes inflation by building up the high prices which are used to justify wage increases. Only the lowest income groups see their living standards ruthlessly held down by purchase tax. The wealthy regard it merely as a financial pinprick, while the average citizen ruefully evades it by means of extended credit and hire purchase.

The Romans, who used a sales tax two thousand years before we did, realized its unfairness and ineffectiveness as a fiscal weapon. The emperor Caligula may have been mad, but he did a sane thing when he abolished the tax, in A.D. 39, and minted a special coin—a bronze squadran—to commemorate the occasion.—S. E. WILMOTT, Bath, Somerset.

The Roman emperor Augustus introduced the tax, together with death duties, to provide retired army veterans with a pension. Tiberius reduced the tax on sales from one per cent to a half per cent in A.D. 17, and Caligula abolished it twenty-two years later. The tax was always unpopular.

Richly Loved

THE short story "Before The Fiesta" (JOHN BULL, October 1) was very witty and showed a remarkable knowledge of Spanish rural life. But a feature of the Catholic Church in Spain is the richness of the trappings, and the personal pride taken in it even by the poorest of the poor. Richard O. Rose's illustration should have included the figure of Christ on the altar cross; and there should have been a canopy over the altar.—J. W. POYNTER, London, N.5.

Weary Bones

WHY have chairs in shops become outmoded since the war? Shopping is a wearying business at the best, and for old people, invalids, convalescents and expectant mothers

the chance to sit down occasionally used to be very welcome. Must every courtesy and consideration be sacrificed to speed and grim efficiency?—V. M. SANDELL, Stalham, Norwich.

Fund Finding

THANK you for your description of how I "fire the first popper" on St. Martin's Day ("It's The Custom," November 12).

The custom was instituted by Dr. Browne Willis, the antiquarian and historian, in memory of his grandfather, who died on St. Martin's Day. But alas, the original Willis church, now the north transept of the present church, is in need of repair, and funds are lacking. Any donations would be gratefully received.—CANON C. A. WHEELER, Bletchley, Bucks.

. . . Since hospitals became State aided I have missed the fund-raising carnivals and fêtes I enjoyed as a

child before the war. But on holiday at Lynton, in north Devon, I came across this irresistible way of appealing for funds.—R. BENNETT, Wallasey, Cheshire.

Distant Lights

A LOT of the countryside may be "dark" (JOHN BULL editorial, October 15) but in the Shetlands I saw electric light in lonely places, and cables stretching under water from island to island. Electricity is a great

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

THE LADY CHOOSES PRESTIGE THIS CHRISTMAS

You, too, will be proud to give, thrilled to receive 'Prestige' this year. So wide a choice, such beautiful things. Ask your nearest store or ironmonger to show you 'Prestige' housewares at prices which we know will please everyone. The list on the right will help you.

1 'Colour-Glo' Kettle. Choice of 4 colours	29/6
2 Coffee Maker. Yellow or Green	32/6
3 Minit Mop	30/-
4 Wall Can Opener with magnetic lid-lifter	37/6
5 Imperial Food Mixer	37/6
6 '675' Egg Beater	27/6
7 'Minor' Pressure Cooker with separators	72/6
8 'Hi-Dome' Pressure Cooker with separators	112/6
9 '75' Pressure Cooker with separators	82/6
10 Steak & Game Knife Set	159/6
11 3-piece Carving Set in moulded casket	152/6
12 3-piece Carving Set	84/-
13 6-piece Holdster Set	112/6
14 Bread Knife in Holder	18/6
15 '1900' Stainless Steel Kitchen Tool Set	97/6
16 'Kitchenette' Set	27/6
17 Stainless Steel Kitchen Scissors	25/-
18 Bread Board and Knife	39/6
19 'Gourmet' Set	45/-

Prices subject to alteration

Prestige

THE GREATEST NAME IN HOUSEWARES

Bundle of Energy. *Barbara Kelly—star of TV and radio. Dramatic actress. Brilliant comedienne. Wife of Bernard Braden. And a busy mother with hungry mouths to feed. 'I love cooking' says Barbara. 'But it's got to be quick with me. And that means Oxo—often'.*

'Cooking's got to be quick with me'

says Barbara Kelly

Wise housewives know these things. They know that cooking—good cooking—is easy with Oxo. And they know they can't get anything, anywhere as good as Oxo at the price. Get some Oxo today—and see how easy it is to be a good cook!

'I LOVE cooking' says Barbara Kelly. 'But I just don't have time to plan elaborate meals. That's where Oxo comes in so handy. I use it for soups and stews and gravy—and very often for making a quick hot drink. Bernard and the children just love it. And if that beefy flavour is anything to go by, it must be just full of goodness.'

When you're as busy as Barbara, cooking *can* be a worry. There's no time to plan meals and hardly enough to prepare them. But it is important to eat well—and to enjoy the food you eat. Because only then do you get full benefit from it. What can you do?

Meatier meals. *Any cook's a better cook when she uses Oxo. Oxo makes meals meatier; gives all meat dishes an extra savoury flavour.*

OXO SAVES WORRY

Always have a good supply of Oxo in the house. A packet of these little cubes on your shelf can save you endless worry. One Oxo cube makes a hot, beefy drink that's cheering enough to welcome any man home. With two cubes you can work wonders with a stew or a casserole. You can serve up rich gravy to order. And you can produce a really appetising meal from left-overs—in next to no time.

BARBARA'S KITCHEN

One of Barbara's favourite recipes

'Here is one of my favourite recipes', says Barbara. 'A favourite with Bernard and the children, too. Try it. I'm sure you'll like it'.

Liver and Bacon Hot-pot

For three or four people you need:

½ lb. ox liver
lb. streaky bacon
1½ lbs. potatoes
1 Oxo cube
2-3 onions
1 tablesp. flour
½ teasp. salt
Pepper

Cut the liver in pieces and dip in flour mixed with salt and pepper. Remove rinds and cut the bacon in strips. Peel and dice the potatoes, cut the onions into very thin rings and dissolve one crumbled Oxo cube in ½ pint of hot water.
Put one-third of the potatoes in the bottom of a fireproof dish and add the liver, bacon and onions. Pour in the Oxo stock and top with the remaining potatoes.
Cover closely and cook at gas setting 3 (340°F) for one hour.

HOW OXO PUTS GOODNESS INTO YOUR MEALS

Every Oxo cube contains hydrolysed protein, beef stock, flour, yeast extract, caramel, salt, beef extract, beef fat, desiccated beef, spices and onion powder.

Oxo is all goodness. And unbeatable value. Just think—six beefy cubes for only 7½d!

Look out for SOOTY on Commercial TV—every Wednesday between 5 and 6 p.m. and Thursdays between 10 and 11 p.m.

OXO CUBE **makes meals meatier**

FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

help to the island crofters and knitters. — MRS. M. H. STEPHEN, Aberdeen.

. . . A lot is heard about "cheap water power," but in Scotland the northern hydro-electric board has raised the price of its fuel above the price of the coal-produced electricity in southern Scotland.—M. R. HILLS, Perth.

. . . I needed a torch to see the pavement edge near my friend's home. She lives not in the dark country, but in a block of modern flats a few minutes from the busy Bayswater Road in the heart of London. — ANNE LEE, Southwell, Notts.

A diesel station at Lerwick gives light to Shetland islands. Many crofters also own private generators; wind generators are quite common, and one in the Orkneys is probably the most powerful in the world. The hydro-electric board has 4,315 customers in north Scotland, who pay more than southern electricity users for the first thousand units, but less for two thousand units and over.

Evil Burns

IN New Delhi last month, I saw the impressive traditional burning of three giant effigies of characters in Hindu mythology. The central figure was the ten-headed, evil Ravana, and with his brother and son he was burned to celebrate his defeat by Rama, the hero of Hindu folk tales.

The Dussehra festival varies in other towns. The warrior god, Rama, is carried through the streets, and

Ravana (centre) with brother and son

episodes from his battle against Ravana are staged with rich pageantry.

In Mysore, the Maharaja rides in procession seated on a golden howdah, and dressed in the robes of his dynasty. Elsewhere, the clash of cymbals and the beating of drums accompany the devotions of millions. —C. ABBOTT, York.

Dear Friends

GOATS are sometimes kept in race-horse stables, not only to give milk to foals but also as companions for temperamental horses ("Goats Invade The Dairy," JOHN BULL, October 22).

Miss Dorothy Paget's steeplechaser, Prince of Denmark, was accompanied by a goat called Sally; but when the horse was flown to America for a race last year, Sally had to stay behind because she was refused a permit to enter the States.

Years ago a goat used to walk around in the paddock with Polly Flinders, a daughter of the great Pretty Polly, and the filly would never give her best without him.

Once I backed another horse with an affection for goats. But he was badly beaten, and I heard the jockey say bitterly, on the way back to the paddock: "I might have had a chance if I'd ridden the goat instead."—F. W., London, S.W.17.

Nostalgic Lather

ZELINSKI'S cover picture of a rather cold-looking hairdressing saloon (JOHN BULL, October 22) took me back to cosier childhood days, when there were no women's saloons and we girls had our hair cut at the barbers.

From a very high chair we surveyed the sporting prints, the gleaming brass fittings, and the polished

leather cushions on the settles. But the greatest joy of all was to see the faces of men being thickly lathered.

The sounds I shall always associate with those far-off visits are of razors stropping and, in winter, the gentle hiss of the gas light.—MRS. J. PIPER, Ilford, Essex.

Crestfallen

THE cover picture of a fall on an ice rink (JOHN BULL, October 15) reminded me of my visit to the Streatham rink to take my daughter on the ice.

After starting her off, I noticed another young girl, with her hair coiled on top, standing at the side. I asked whether I could help her off the rails—then fell over myself.

Politely, the girl helped me up. I learned that she was Yvonne Sugden, who became British women's amateur figure skating champion at the age of fourteen.—MRS. M. WOOD, Tooting, London.

Safe Heights

AS a helicopter pilot, I would like to say to reader F. G. ("Free Speech," October 22) that any pilot who hovers at two hundred feet is courting disaster. In the event of engine failure he cannot make a safe emergency landing from that height.

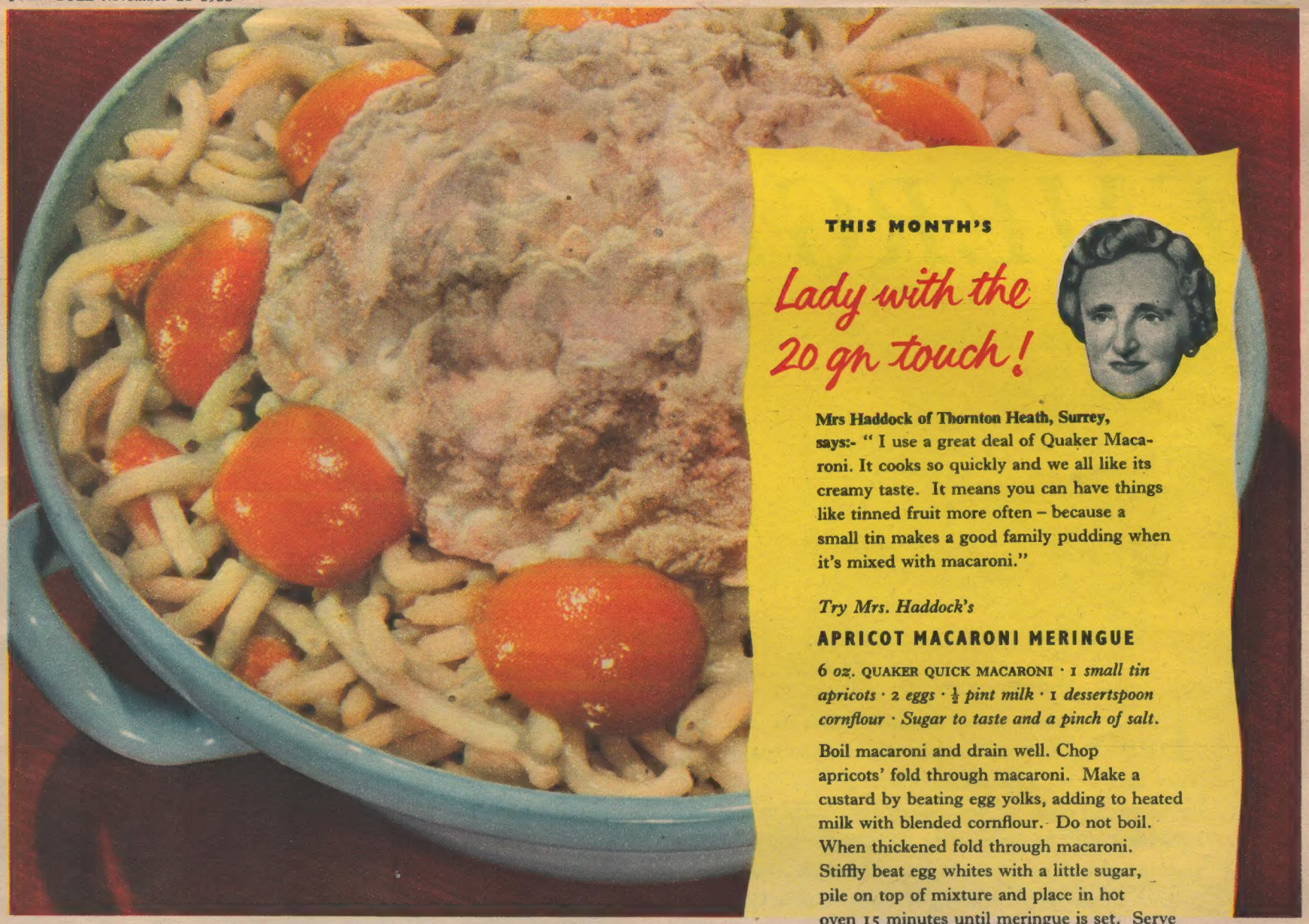
Even a big helicopter cannot be heard more than a mile down wind, so the estimate of twenty square miles of noise is rather optimistic.—J. A. C. M., Lossiemouth, Scotland.

"To hover between fifty and three hundred feet is dangerous," says a helicopter expert, "because without airspeed it is difficult to get into gliding position from that height in the event of engine failure. At about

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

THIS WEEK'S COVER

JEWELLERS are lucky people; they share in so much reflected happiness. On every romantic occasion, from a christening to a golden wedding, there's a jeweller to furnish catalysts to pleasant memories—in gold and silver and diamonds. In his fascinating treasure house, Petts's cover salesman knows that this is going to be a long job; engagement rings sparkle as anonymously as stars when they're vying for attention at arm's length. This, though, is one occasion when a woman has an excuse for not being able to make up her mind. She has to be very, very sure that the reflections in the ring for *her* finger will be happy ones for a lifetime.



THIS MONTH'S

Lady with the 20 gn touch!

Mrs Haddock of Thornton Heath, Surrey, says:- "I use a great deal of Quaker Macaroni. It cooks so quickly and we all like its creamy taste. It means you can have things like tinned fruit more often – because a small tin makes a good family pudding when it's mixed with macaroni."

Try Mrs. Haddock's

APRICOT MACARONI MERINGUE

6 *oz.* QUAKER QUICK MACARONI · 1 *small tin apricots* · 2 *eggs* · ½ *pint milk* · 1 *dessertspoon cornflour* · *Sugar to taste and a pinch of salt.*

Boil macaroni and drain well. Chop apricots' fold through macaroni. Make a custard by beating egg yolks, adding to heated milk with blended cornflour. Do not boil. When thickened fold through macaroni. Stiffly beat egg whites with a little sugar, pile on top of mixture and place in hot oven 15 minutes until meringue is set. Serve hot. Makes 4 good helpings.

QUAKER PRESENTS 20 gns every month

FOR YOUR FAVOURITE MACARONI RECIPE

What tempters many macaroni recipes can be! Perhaps *you* have one tucked away in an an old cook-book – or maybe you've a 'way with you' for inventing your own. Just remember that Quaker Oats Limited pay 20 guineas every month for a macaroni recipe – *and it may very well be yours!* The range of dishes you can make with Quaker Quick Macaroni is almost unlimited because it blends deliciously with so many other ingredients. And what a time-saver! Cooks in only 7 minutes – and keeps the nourishing goodness of the selected wheat that makes it. Another reason why Quaker Quick Macaroni is first choice with British housewives, is that its own creamy flavour gives such a wide scope for pleasing *all* the family. You can make a 'more please' sweet like this month's winner – or a meaty, man-style dish that hard-working husbands thoroughly enjoy. So what about it? Have *you* the twenty-guinea touch? Send your recipe to : 20 Guinea Recipes, Dept. J.3, Quaker Oats Limited, Southall, Middlesex.

Each month a panel of judges will choose the winning monthly macaroni recipe which will be the best combination, in their opinion, of originality, economy and flavour and the decision of the panel shall be final and binding. Copyright of all entries shall belong to Quaker Oats Limited who shall have the right to publish, or not, any entries submitted and the names of any prize winners, and to use any recipe submitted, whether awarded a prize or not, in any manner and at any time.

* **Don't forget to ask your grocer for the free, full colour Quaker recipe leaflet, or write direct to Quaker Oats Limited, Southall, Middlesex.**

QUAKER QUICK MACARONI

EMERGENCY CALL!

The fast, modern cars of London's Police are maintained at the highest possible pitch of performance and safety. They have to be. In moments of emergency there's no time for failure, no room for unnecessary risk. Every item of their equipment must be the best, the safest, tested and proved beyond question. It goes without saying, therefore, that the tyres they use are reinforced with High-Tenacity Rayon Cord.

This remarkable rayon was developed by Courtaulds in 1937 and further great strides were made during the early 40's to meet the urgent needs of war. Over the last 18 years the strength of Courtaulds' Rayon Cord has been increased by one third; its resistance to fatigue by from four to five times. Every year, more and more rayon tyres are in use covering more millions of miles in safety. Today, High-Tenacity Rayon Cord is acknowledged to be the world's leading tyre cord.

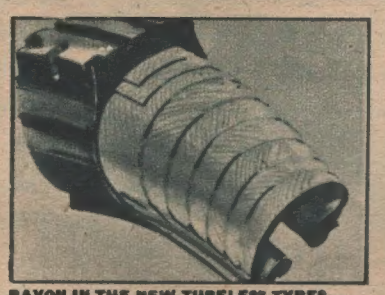
The same strength, the same reliability and long service—these are yours as well when you buy tyres moulded on a cord basis of High-Tenacity Rayon.

RAYON AT WAR . . .

It took a war to establish rayon as the safest, most economical reinforcement for tyres. On Rayon Cord tyres, overloaded vehicles travelled great distances over rough country, without tyre breakdown. Since then, the resistance to fatigue of Rayon Cord has been greatly increased and its strength improved by as much as 30% . . .

RAYON TAKES 125 M.P.H. IMPACT . . .

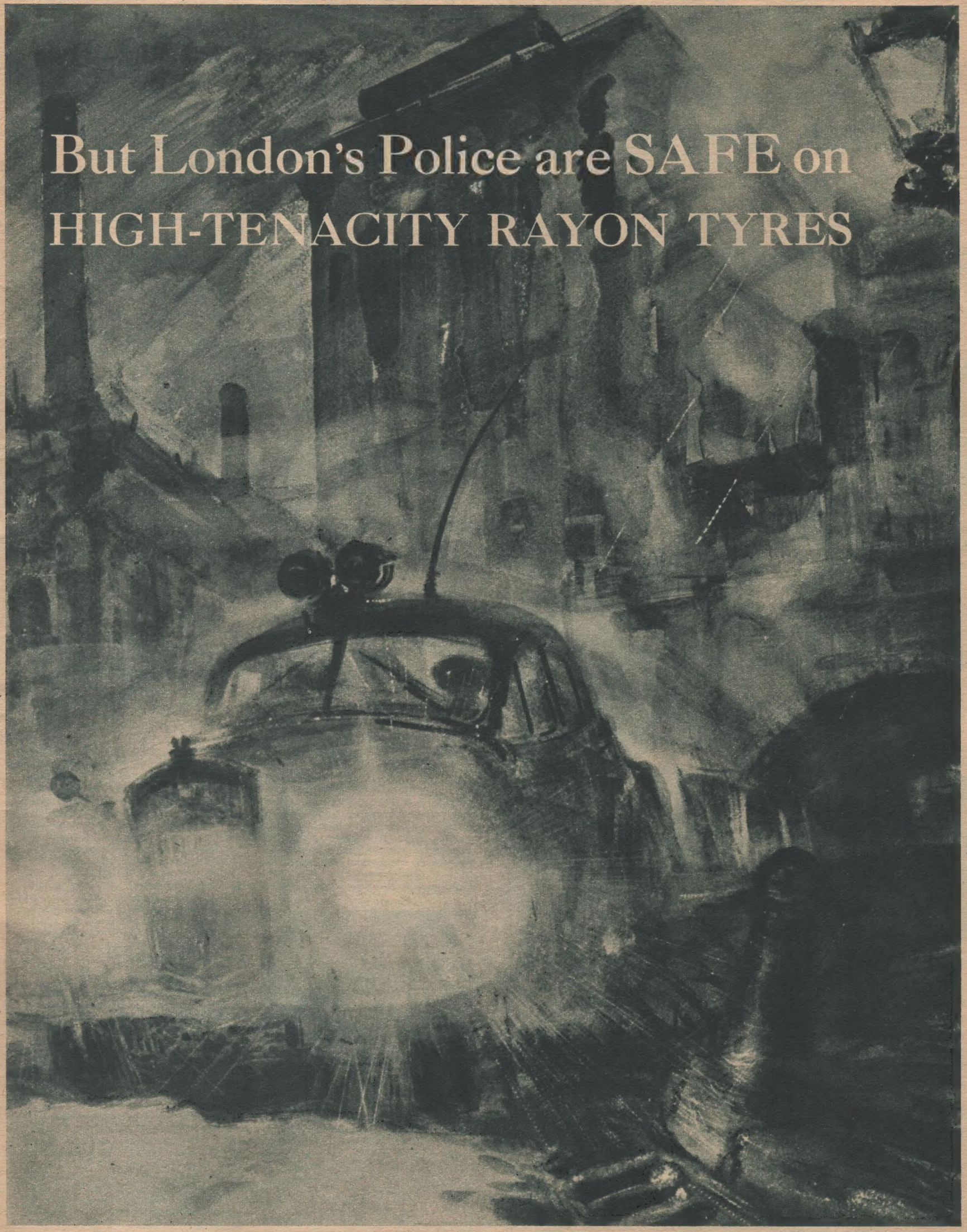
Today's improved Courtaulds rayon has a greater tensile strength than that of steel. This tyre was dropped from a 40 ft. tower . . . hit the ground at 125 miles an hour with an impact greater than that of a jet plane landing. The force of the fall smashed the steel wheel on which the tyre was mounted, but not a single tyre cord was broken.



RAYON IN THE NEW TUBELESS TYRES . . .

The astonishing resistance of the new tubeless tyres to blowouts and punctures owes much to the great strength of High-Tenacity Rayon Cord. These new tyres, like most tyres on the road today, are built on a basis of this amazingly strong Tyre Cord. It keeps tyres running cooler . . . adds many extra miles to tyre life.

You're *safer* when you ride on RAYON!



COURTAULDS HIGH-TENACITY RAYON—THE WORLD'S LEADING TYRE CORD

9

Now!-a Readicut FLOOR-COVERING for every room!

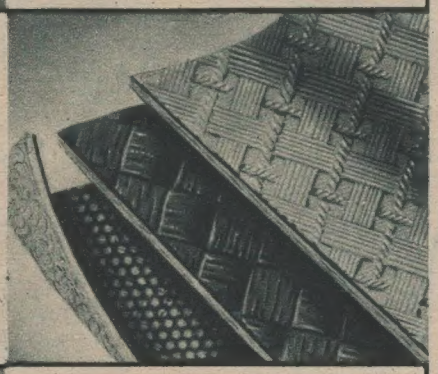
Readicut now offer you floor-coverings for every need, and at prices you can easily afford ! Needleloom felted carpeting, Hardura plastic underfelted floor-covering, and lovely Axminster carpets—the range of colours is superb. Readicut floor-coverings are wonderful value for money, and they are all covered by the famous Readicut money-back guarantee. Send for samples and choose warm, hard-wearing Readicut floor-coverings for *your* home. Easy payment terms are available.

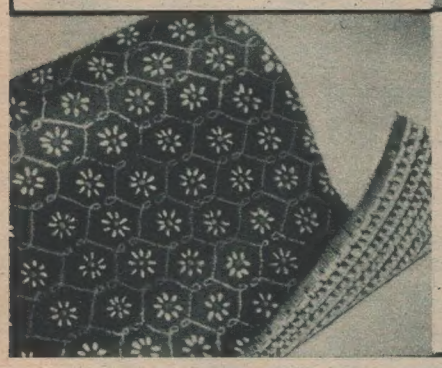
NEEDLELOOM

Fitted carpeting adds warmth and colour to your home. Readicut's extra thick, rubber backed felted carpeting is both inexpensive and easy to lay yourself. For bedrooms, landing, sitting room and surrounds.

HARDURA PLASTIC FLOOR COVERING

Waterproof, easily cleaned, underfelted floor-covering. Made of tough plastic, it resists stains and acids in the kitchen and is absolutely hygienic. Ideal for kitchen, bathroom and nursery. Does not split or crack when being laid.





AXMINSTER

Beautiful carpets for the best rooms in the house. Available in squares, rugs, and lengths. The finest value-for-money carpets on the market.

NEEDLELOOM

27 in., 36 in., 54 in., 108 in., widths. Prices from 16/3 a yard, Standard Grade. 18/11 a yard, Super Grade.
Also in seamless squares.

HARDURA

17 in., 25 in., 34 in., 50 in., widths. Prices from 6/11 a yard ; or from 7/6 a yard, two-tone colours.
Also bordered Silversheen for stairs and corridors.

AXMINSTER

Carpet squares from £17 19s. 6d. (3 x 2½ yards). Body carpet, 27 in. wide, 31/11 a yard. Stair carpet, 22½ in. wide, 27/11 a yard.

SEND TODAY
for actual samples and prices

with complete colour range and terms. Please enclose 1/- only, refundable on return of samples. (Post in sealed envelope.)

To : READICUT WOOL CO. LTD., DEPT. C 12, OSSETT, YORKSHIRE.
Please send sample brochure of Readicut floor-coverings.
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FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

thirty to fifty feet a machine could come down vertically in safety; above three hundred feet the pilot has time to set his rotors to fine pitch, and 'windmill' to earth."

Car Sitters

A "SITTER-IN" car service for learner drivers would be a boon, saving them the bother of finding half-willing friends and acquaintances to keep them within the law. Fully-fledged drivers could advertise their services, or form a pool, and the A.A. and R.A.C. might issue certificates to suitable men.—MRS. V. M. STEVENTON, Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire.

"I do not think there is sufficient demand for such a service," says an A.A. official. "People prepared to pay can probably afford to take lessons from a driving school."

Soccer Renaissance

READERS of Ferenc Puskas's two articles in JOHN BULL are likely to ask—particularly after England's defeat by Wales—what was the secret of Hungarian soccer that made the national team progress from the 2-6 London defeat, in 1936, to a 6-3 victory in 1953.

When, in the early thirties, Hungarian soccer touched rock bottom, the barriers between the amateur and professional game were lowered. First a daring selector put amateur players in the national eleven, then the professional league was disbanded, and amateur teams competed alongside the professionals. Finally professional teams were allowed to choose an amateur "mother club," members of which could play with the professionals without losing status.

Similar measures could help to bring about a British soccer renaissance.—GEORGE A. FLORIS, London, N.W.1.

Beer Gallery

WHEN I called at a pub in Haslemere, Surrey, recently, I saw that the "regulars" were lined up on the shelves—painted on pint glasses by publican George Millard, who devoted himself to commercial art before the war. About ten years ago, the customers at the Crown and Cushion

George Millard paints a "regular"

were always getting their glasses mixed. So George began his sittings, painting with enamels directly on to the glass. More than thirty regulars are portrayed, and Mrs. Millard has to be careful not to "wash them out" when she rinses the glasses in hot water.—J. A. FINNEY, London, W.C.1.

Gipsy Blood

YOUR defence of the gipsies (JOHN BULL editorial, October 22) errs on the romantic side. Many nomadic families have little or no true Romany blood in their veins.

Some of these van-dwellers, who live in filthy conditions, reap the benefits of a civilized community without paying rates and taxes.

In my district we are troubled in the summer by "gipsies" trying to sell wild flowers and home-made clothes pegs. Failure to buy often results in muttered imprecations.

No one who has lived in Kent during the fruit and hop-picking seasons will blame shopkeepers for their "no gipsies served here" signs. Gipsies should be more strictly controlled, for the protection of householders and the elevation of their own living standards.—ALUN MORGAN, Rochester, Kent.

. . . Gipsies have long been leaders of fashion. They were the first people to wear ear-rings and head-scarves, and their women were the first to smoke. Most of us are gipsies at heart, hence our love of camp life. —H. MACPHERSON, Glasgow, S.W.2.

Cotton Problem

I WONDER if at least some of the cotton industry's present troubles (JOHN BULL editorial, October 8) do not stem from the failure to re-equip with modern plant just after the war.

In a speech in 1950 Sir Stafford Cripps said that fewer than fifteen per cent of cotton spinners had taken advantage of a Treasury grant for the purpose of re-equipment. This may help to justify the government's rather stern—and in my view correct—attitude towards Lancashire.—DR. J. C. WOOD, Malvern, Worcestershire.

"Spinners, weavers, finishers and merchants go to make up the cotton trade," says the Cotton Board. "The grant was to spinners only—on conditions. These included the need to amalgamate into larger groups, which scared away many of the small men. Today one of the chief problems is that the 'horizontal' grouping of the industry, in which one firm concentrates on one process, has not given way to 'vertical' organization. Only a few firms take in the raw cotton and turn out the finished goods, ready for sale."

Check A Year

I THINK medical men agree that a general overhaul, every year at least, is desirable; but it would take a very brave person to go to his doctor's busy surgery and ask for it.

I would suggest an out-patients' department at every hospital, to encourage people to make an appointment for an annual check-up.—MRS. M. MURISON, Aberdeen.

"I have nothing against annual check-ups," says a doctor, "provided that people do not get complacent and ignore symptoms that may develop between the check points. One way to have a thorough check is to take out a small insurance with a company that insists upon a medical examination."

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Full details on page 17

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

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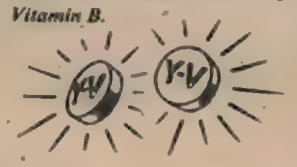

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It's easy to get wine you'll enjoy—just ask your wine merchant, and he'll gladly advise you. Here are just a few hints:

Table wines can be quite inexpensive, and a bottle easily serves four people. With fish and white meat, *white* wine, served cold. With roasts, grills and game, *red* wine, at room temperature. Champagne goes with everything.

Sherry is the perfect appetizer, and is generally drunk before meals. But it's delicious at any time for informal or formal entertaining. A wide choice, from very dry to rich brown.

Port—vintage, tawny, or ruby—is a wonderful drink to round off a good meal: perfect for toasts. It's fine also at odd moments; like sherry, it keeps after opening, so you can always offer your friends a glass.

For "A Short Guide to Wine," ask your wine merchant, or write or telephone: The Friends of Wine, Dept. 83, 1 Vintners' Place, Upper Thames St., London, E.C.4. (City 5377).

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THIEF OF DIAMONDS

by BURNHAM CARTER

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

IT WAS MIDNIGHT IN HAVANA, and Tio flicked the light switch in the Café Mosca to indicate that it was time to close. The remaining patrons began obediently to finish their refreshments. They were all old and good customers—Severo Lupin, the Basque smuggler; Olee Wang, a trader in stolen goods; Yoyo Marino, the pickpocket; Sam, the American taxi driver, the last of the rough-and-tumble fighters; and others of that kind—all top men in their field.

After they had gone, Tio rang down the street shutter that closed the open front of the café, leaving the small inset door ajar. Amelia had come out from the kitchen. She was a pretty woman with luminous dark eyes, and she wore a red gingham apron over a green sleeveless dress. She stood with her hands on her hips, surveying the room thoughtfully.

The Mosca had some twenty marble-topped tables on

As they danced, Agnes said, "I'm glad we met." Tio began to reply—and stopped. For, there at the side of the dance floor, he saw his wife

a floor of blue and yellow tiles. Across one side there was a mahogany bar with a pile of pineapples at one end, and clusters of bottles. The room breathed an enduring fragrance of rum, coffee and tobacco.

"I need a thousand dollars," Amelia declared.

"You deserve much more," Tio replied gallantly.

"Look, Tio—several of these table tops have stains that won't come off, the walls should be repainted, and many tiles replaced on the floor. You should have a new coffee urn."

She recited a list of needs that indicated a regrettably serious consideration of the matter. "In short, the room needs brightening," she concluded.

"The only time I think so is when you are not in it," Tio said.

"No, seriously," she said, smiling.

"Seriously, we do not have the money, my tuberose."

"Well, we must save it, then," she said.

SHE went upstairs to their rooms, leaving Tio to finish locking up. He was about to do so when a man appeared at the dark opening in the steel shutter.

"Well, I am just in time," he remarked, in a cool, almost insolent manner. He had a narrow, sly face which Tio thought he had seen before; but it may have been only the type that was familiar.

"No, señor, you are a little late," Tio replied. "We are closed for the night."

"I only wish to deliver a message," the man said. "From Senator Felipe Corbo. The senator would like to see you."

Tio knew of the senator—a cheerful and unscrupulous politician who was running for a third term as a member of the Opposition. The better elements in Cuba were against him; he was a notorious café brawler, and his name had been linked with the mysterious murder of a chorus girl; but he had a following because he was a clever showman, spending money lavishly and conducting a colourful campaign against the government, based on the theory that the best proof of one accusation is to make another.

"Perhaps you could call at his house tomorrow evening," the man said.

Tio reflected. Probably no good would come of the interview, but that was not necessarily against it. He was not impressed by the senator's rank—in Tio's view, a man was not important unless he was important to him—but he was curious as to what the senator had in mind. It was this sort of small diversion from the routine that kept a man young.

"All right, I will go there," he said.

The man nodded and disappeared into the darkness of the street.

Tio decided not to mention the visit to Amelia at the moment. Secret calls at midnight had a disreputable sound: they were associated in her mind with Tio's premarital career, which had been concerned with activities not sanctioned by law; she was always fearful that he might be lured back to his underworld friends. It wasn't until the next afternoon that Tio remarked casually that he would be away for a short time that evening.

"A senator wants to see me," he said.

"A senator! That sounds very important. Which one?"

"Corbo."

"Oh!" she was dubious. "Isn't he the one that isn't so good?"

"Well, he's human," Tio said.

"Um-m! All right. But don't let him involve you in anything human, Tio."

"Certainly not, star of my heart!"

Corbo's home was an expensive marble mansion in the outskirts of the city. He was unmarried, but it could not be said that he lived alone. There were always numerous henchmen about, a pretty girl or two, and a stream of visitors. Tio waited in the hall, in a thin haze of cigar smoke, hearing men's voices and raucous laughter. On one wall hung an enormous poster with a picture of the senator beneath the slogan: INTEGRITY, HONOUR, FIDELITY—of which it could, at least, be said that one term applied as well as another. After a moment the senator entered the hall, greeted Tio affably and conducted him into a small office, closing the door.

"This is top secret," he said with a wink. He was a squat, blue-jowled man with a round, shrewd face. He poured two small glasses of rum. "You are asking yourself why I sent for you, Mr. Martinez, and I shall tell you. These are difficult times in which hard work alone will not get a man to the top. To be a success, one must be daring. I am such a man. You, señor, are such a man."

Tio neither confirmed nor denied it.

"I stand for good government," Corbo continued. "I wish to rid our country of the corrupt administrators who plunder it now. Yesterday I made a speech in which I said—" here the senator rose, flung one hand wide, and addressed his audience:

"About the only thing this administration hasn't stolen is the diamond in the floor of the Capitol. And I'm not even sure that that's safe."

"Very well put," Tio commented agreeably.

The famous government diamond was set under glass in the reception hall beneath the Capitol dome. It was a blue-white Kimberley valued at eight thousand dollars. A million tourists had gaped at it, a million Cubans, including Tio, had shaken their heads over it, a dozen guide books had hailed the extravagant gesture. It was the point from which distances were reckoned between Havana and other cities. It was the showpiece of the building and was certainly the best-known jewel in the Western Hemisphere.

"But suppose it should be stolen!" Corbo said, fixing Tio with his bright, piggish eyes. "What a triumph for me! Every café in Havana would shake with laughter. The government would look ridiculous—and that's one thing a government can't stand." He swore, chuckled heartily at the prospect, and poured two more glasses of rum. "So I want you to steal it for me," he said.

TIO laughed. He found both the man and his project amusing. Many strange proposals had been made to him during his lifetime, but this—to steal the prize jewel from the very seat of government—was certainly the most fantastic. And yet—but still——

"You misjudge me, senator," he said. "I am only an honest restaurant keeper."

"Yes, yes, I know," Corbo interjected. "But not always! I have heard of your skill in—other activities. Long past, of course. But this would not be too difficult. The fact that no one would think of doing it is your protection. And I will pay a thousand dollars."

It was an impressive coincidence that one thousand dollars was exactly the sum that Amelia had mentioned. And purloining the diamond wasn't the same as ordinary theft; that is, it was stealing from the government, which in Tio's opinion was different. Also, it was for someone else, which was another difference. Finally, as Corbo had said, the operation might well be much easier than it appeared at first thought.

"Well, I confess it interests me," Tio said. "Let me look the scene over. I assume we have a few days."

"Ah, that is our one limitation," Corbo murmured regretfully. "The fact is, I got into a little argument in a rhumba dive two nights ago. The dancer bent over to pick up that damned handkerchief in her teeth—you know how they do it. The opportunity was irresistible, and I spanked her. It was only my form of clapping, but she seemed to resent it. She is

bringing an assault charge against me tomorrow afternoon. I want some big news in the papers the following morning to crowd that out. So you would have to do it tomorrow."

"In that case it would cost more," Tio said. "Say, fifteen hundred."

Corbo's face looked surly for a moment, but he assented.

"Meet me here on the night following," he said. "No, not here! Come to the El Encanto night club around nine o'clock. Pass by my table, and I will meet you in the men's room."

Tio took a taxi up the Prado to the street cafés that faced the Capitol across a vast open plaza. The immense white marble building, similar in style to the one in Washington, was perhaps the largest and most magnificent in the world. The main entrance was in the centre, on the second floor, at the top of the steps; but tourists entered from the street level, at the side. Tio had visited it and remembered the arrangements. Behind the three bronze doors of

Corbo chuckled. "Suppose someone stole the diamond—what a triumph it would be for me!" Tio found the project amusing. He had never heard anything so fantastic

the main entrance was the reception hall with the diamond; and in a recess behind the jewel, underneath the towering dome, was a bronze statue of a figure representing Cuba, thirty-seven feet high. The hall was so vast that in it the footsteps of the visitors were almost soundless.

Sipping a *café negro,* Tio studied the outside of the Capitol building and planned his course of action.

He would go through with the last group of tourists in the afternoon and stay behind; he would conceal himself somewhere, and at a moment when the guard was absent, he would chisel out the diamond; or if he had no opportunity, he would simply leave without it and work out another plan.

The doors would undoubtedly be locked; but he should be able to get out through one of the long Italian windows, on each side, that opened on to a colonnade. He could walk a ledge from there to the central steps, and descend the stone balustrade to a point where he could safely drop to the ground. This would be in full view of the street cafés, several of which were open all night long.

Tio drew a deep breath. Yes, there was a risk; but the preposterous quality of the operation was in his favour; and what else but risk could put a little colour in the pallid cheek of life?

At the next table two American women—one very pretty and in her thirties, the other older—were asking the waiter a question in English which the latter did not understand. It is well known that a beautiful woman stimulates a man's natural desire to be helpful, and Tio, who had learned the language in his rum-running days, stepped into the breach.

"Excuse me, señora," he said. "May I be of service?"

"I just wanted to know if the President of Cuba lives in that building."

"No; that is for the legislature. The president has a palace of his own."

"Oh. We have only just come here. You have many beautiful things in this country."

"Since your arrival, we have one more," Tio said politely. He was quite sure that in another sentence or two he could have joined them at the table; not that he necessarily would have done so, but it is comforting to a man to know that, if he should have to begin over again with women, he could. In any event, he had to go home since he would be away the next two nights. He rose, exchanged a smile of farewell with the ladies, and departed.

It so happened that Amelia had not been without the companionship of the other sex either. Captain Raoul Molina, of the secret police, a suave and handsome man, made it a practice to visit Mosca every two or three weeks for both professional and personal reasons.

Dressed in plain clothes, the captain stood at the opposite end of the street, making a mental record of the underworld members of the clientele; and then noting that Amelia seemed to be alone at the cash register, he entered and chatted with her while he drank a coffee at the bar.

"When I see you, señora, I realize why the café continues to prosper," the captain remarked.

"Well, it's really Tio's doing," Amelia replied modestly. "He takes a great interest in the business."

"I must confess that that surprises me," said Molina, who had known Tio during his illegal bachelorhood. "This, I take it, is his night off."

"Yes."

"When's yours?"

"The night after tomorrow."

"What a coincidence! It's mine, too."

"Indeed, captain!"

"And there is a band concert at the foot of the Prado, near the sea."

"I know. I am going."

"So am I. But it is no fun going alone."

"No, it's not."

The captain bestowed upon her the smile of a man who, after some delay about dinner, smells the steak broiling over the charcoal.

"Perhaps we could go together, then," he said.

"Thank you," Amelia replied pleasantly, "but I am going with my sister and her husband and the two children."

The captain glanced sharply at her, but her eyes were demurely cast down.

"I hope you have a good time," he said stiffly.

"I hope you do, too, captain."

She was going to tell Tio about the captain's effort to date her, but she forgot this in her indignation over Tio's announcement that he would have to be away the next two nights.

"But that's three nights in a row," she exclaimed. "And one of them is supposed to be my night off."

"It grieves me, little flower, but the senator has to have the work done at that time. And he pays well. I may have some money for you."

"But why all the mystery?" she demanded. "Is it something to be ashamed of?"

"Well, the senator has his reasons, I suppose. He has asked me not to tell anyone."

"I am not 'anyone.' I am your wife."

"You are all the world to me," Tio said, "and how can I tell all the world?"

But she was not amused. "Are you working with some of your underworld friends?"

"No."

"Are there any girls in this arrangement?"

"No one mentioned them."

"Well, I don't like it," Amelia said crossly.

She was still stiff with him the next day, unbending only for a moment, and necessarily, when he pinched her as he left for his assignment in the late afternoon. In his pocket he had a cold chisel, a hammer and a small hand drill.

The Street of the Little Lamp was piled high with sunshine which spread richly over the great plaza before the Capitol. A group of some thirty tourists was waiting at the street-level door for the last tour of the day. Tio slid among them, happily inconspicuous—until, to his dismay, a female voice hailed him: "Well, we meet again!" It was the pretty woman with her older companion. "I didn't know you were a sightseer, too," she said.

"Our conversation reminded me that I hadn't visited the Capitol for some time," Tio said, hiding his concern. "I could not have picked a better moment, señora."

"It's nice for us to have a companion who knows his way around," she said. "Why don't we introduce ourselves? I am Mrs. Agnes Warren. This is my aunt, Mrs. Curley."

"My name is Roberto Lopez," Tio said.

"Good! I'm sure we're going to have an interesting tour."

The group moved into the building, passed through the library, the special offices, the senate chamber. Agnes chatted amiably of this and that. She was a bright, unconventional person, Tio decided, who was probably on a holiday for the first time, and was going to enjoy every minute of it. He liked her. But the encounter was awkward, and he would have to prepare the way for his disappearance.

"I may have to step out before the end," he said. "I promised to meet a friend."

"Well, you must at least stay for the famous diamond."

"Well, of course, I've seen it."

"You mustn't be blasé about diamonds. By the way, Mr. Lopez—tomorrow night we're going to one of those outdoor night clubs, under the palms. Which is the best, do you think?"

For a moment Tio hesitated. Since he was going to El Encanto alone to meet Corbo, it might be helpful to have them there as a cover. He gave them the name and said he would be there himself for a short time.

"Well, that's nice. Be sure to wave to us!"

"Save me a dance, señora."

"I'll do my best, but you know what the competition is like!"

At one end of the reception hall the bronze doors were opened, and the admiring tourists paused to look down it, between two rows of tall bronze lamps and marble benches. At the midpoint stood the statue representing Cuba, a colossal hollow bronze figure, on a base twenty feet in diameter.

A short distance in front of it was the glass-covered disc in the marble floor containing the famous diamond. The vista was handsome. Agnes Warren whispered her excitement. The group advanced swiftly, to huddle around the jewel.

He would not need the drill, Tio decided; with the cold chisel and hammer he could easily

pry out the glass; it should not take him long.

"Twenty-four carats," the guide was chanting. "Purest blue-white. . . . More than eight thousand dollars. . . ."

Tio strolled behind the statue. The group moved on, went out the other end. A bell rang distantly. The guards at each end of the hall closed the doors. So far, so good; but they would return for inspection soon. Tio emerged, to glance again along both wings of the hall. There was no place to hide except behind the statue.

If the guards stayed together—and they undoubtedly came in a pair—he could move around the statue, keeping it between him and them; if they passed around it separately, he would have to crouch on the base between the huge feet; on a careless inspection—and after all these years the guards would be casual—he should escape notice. He could not get out until darkness fell outside; so he could not set to work until at least 8.30; at the most, there would be only three inspections before then. He waited.

He did not hear the click of the bronze door at the end of the hall; but the guard who opened it called back to someone. The guard strolled along the hall, passing on the inner side of the statue, and went out. That was easy. Number one, Tio thought.

An hour later, around 7.30, came the second visit. This time there were two guards. He had to decide, as they entered, what he would do: should he take a chance that they would not separate? If he was right, he could simply move around the statue; but if he was wrong, it would be too late to mount the base and achieve partial concealment between the feet. He reached his decision quickly, with the coolness that always marked him in the face of danger: he mounted.

The two guards advanced. They stood for several minutes at the diamond, talking about Havana's new lightweight boxer.

"He is good, but he has no left," one of them said. He walked to the base of the statue and leaned against it. "Without a left, he cannot beat the American."

"But he has grace," the other said. "What American boxer has that?"

"What is grace if you don't win?" the first one said. He straightened, glanced behind the statue, with his companion. Number two.

An hour passed. The golden light outside the long windows grew soft, became faintly lavender. If it took half an hour to dig the diamond out it would be dark enough to escape when he finished. But he could not start now, when the guards might appear at any minute; he would start immediately after the third tour. Eight-forty-five. Surely they wouldn't leave the hall locked up for the night without further inspection? If so, he would defeat himself by waiting. But if he started, and they opened the door, he would be caught.

At last, they came. They were not talking, which was unfortunate. But what would they talk about, night after night, all night long? The recess where the statue stood was filled with dusk now; it was the interim moment between light and dark—a good moment for concealment, before the lights were put on.

But a flashlight beam shot up along the wall and crossed the massive chest of the statue.

"Not like the women I know," one guard said.

"Thank God!" the other said.

They passed down the hall and out. Number Three. Tio breathed deeply and sprang into action. The sound of his hammer on the chisel

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Tio opened the window as a guard's flashlight prodded the darkness around him. If he were spotted now he knew that his game would be up

head was absorbed in the vast spaces of the hall. He worked along the edges of the glass; it was too thick to crack. Sweat poured from his face and ran in rivulets down his back.

Ten minutes. Fifteen. If they opened the door, he was caught like a sitting duck, in the middle of the floor. A section of cement broke off. The chisel went deep enough to prise with, but the glass held. He worked along the opening, and down one side; then prised. The cement cracked, the glass loosened; another blow, and it lifted. He pushed it back and put his chisel to the setting of the diamond. In a minute he had it. "Bravo, bravo," he whispered jubilantly.

He put it in his pocket and ran to one of the long windows and tugged the handle that turned the long vertical bolt. A shaft of light fell into the now gloomy hall from the opening door at the end. Tio opened the window as a flashlight beam prodded near him. He leaped through the colonnade to the ledge, and ran along it to the balustrade of the steps, and down it until he could drop into the shrubbery. There was a faint shout above him. They must have seen the open window.

He walked swiftly through the grounds to the rear of the Capitol and then boldly down the walk and past a policeman, who did not bother to look at him. Two girls murmured at him from the shadow of a doorway, and he threw them a kiss and went on his way.

The theft of the diamond from the Cuban Capitol was headlined across the front pages of the newspapers the next morning. The head of the National Police was summoned from his bed, and photographed gazing sternly at the broken cavity in the floor; the chief of the Capitol guard was pictured, pointing to the open window. The stories were full of colourful speculation: it was a Communist conspiracy; it was an inside job; it was a well-known Italian gangster. The report that a chorus girl was suing a senator for assault dropped to an insignificant paragraph on an inside page.

The afternoon papers really had fun with the theft. Reporters recalled Corbo's remark that "the government would, if it could, even steal the diamond from the Capitol," and interviewed the readily accessible senator. He was sorry, he said, he shouldn't have called it to the government's attention.

The editorials were sarcastic; Havana chuckled and gibed; the government, flustered and enraged, ordered the secret police to take over the investigation.

That evening Captain Molina returned moodily to his office, after an unpleasant interview with his chief. The latter, obviously under great pressure, had ordered Molina to solve the problem, without excuses.

The captain had no clues. The guards had been questioned at length, and their private lives investigated; they were tentatively cleared. About 2,100 people had entered the Capitol that day. In time, he might find out which one had stayed behind.

But there was no time. The government, for political reasons, wanted the mystery unravelled at once, and the diamond returned.

After long cogitation, the captain decided upon a mode of operation. It required the help of Tio Martinez, whose acquaintance with the underworld was known to be extensive. Molina set out for the Café Mosca, regretting only that Amelia would not be there, since, as he recalled, this was her night off.

However, she was there—harried and tired by the evening rush that had been unusually large and had at last subsided. Tio had left in the middle of it.

"So you will have to look for him somewhere else if it is so important," she said, looking prettier than ever in her vexation and slight disarray. "I am going to close the café and go to bed."

Her mood offered an opportunity which the

These were the men who were told: "Hold on—and you'll make history"

THE SIEGE

by ARTHUR CAMPBELL, M.C.

"Kohima will probably go down as the greatest battle in history," Earl Mountbatten has said. "It was in effect the Battle of Burma. . . ."

HERE is the first full story of the courage and the torment of five hundred British soldiers fighting against overwhelming odds. Surrounded, they kept a Japanese division at bay for sixteen savage, bloody days.

Kohima saw the courage of John Harman, V.C., who marched forward alone against a Jap machine-gun nest. . . .

As Harman moved in, head thrust forward, he must have looked to the Japs like some monster proof against the bullets they fired against him in a solid stream. He advanced deliberately till he leaped into the machine-gun post. There came a scream of agony, then another, then a single shot. A moment later John Harman appeared holding the Jap machine-gun above his head for all the soldiers to see.

Of a different sort was the courage of Major Bobby Shaw as he lay badly wounded in a shallow trench at the first-aid post and watched the mortar bombs that were dropping round him. . . .

He was always cheerful. Someone asked him why he kept a revolver on his chest. "That's for me," he said, "in case the Japs get in." At any time he thought he might have to use it.

At Kohima men fought with shovels, with their bare hands, often without food or water. They held on long past breaking point in a relentless hell of steel and slaughter.

Arthur Campbell, whose earlier book, "Jungle Green," was a best-seller that is now a classic, saw the men of Kohima when they marched out victorious. His reconstruction of the siege is another brilliant piece of writing. It begins . . .

The Royal West Kents held Kohima

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

captain was not one to overlook. "Why don't we look for him together?" he suggested soothingly. "You need to relax, señora. I have my car. It is a lovely night. Let us ride around, and if we do not find him, perhaps he will be here when we return."

Well, why not? Amelia thought. She did indeed need relaxation; and while the gleam in the handsome captain's eye indicated that he was not interested solely in either that or in finding her husband, she could cope with his other interests; and this time Tio certainly needed a lesson.

"I'll slip on another dress," she said.

Since the El Encanto night club was a good half-hour by car from the city centre, Tio had arranged with Sam, the American taxi driver, his escort on many old-time expeditions, to take him there.

The tables were set outdoors under the stately royal palms, and Tio spotted Senator Corbo's at once; it was by far the noisiest; the senator and a dozen of his friends had clearly been celebrating for some time.

Tio did not wish to go there directly, however, so as the head waiter questioned him he looked for his two girl friends, the American visitors, and found them.

"We've been looking for you," Agnes said cheerfully. "We bet you're the man who stole that diamond."

"If I had, I would have given it to you" Tio said.

"You always have something nice to say. I think I like Cubans."

"I hope you do. Would you dance with me?"

"You and Maud dance first, and then you dance with me, and we'll let you return to your party."

Tio led his partner past the Corbo table and caught the senator's eye. A few minutes later, during an intermission, the two men met in the men's room.

Corbo, flushed with strong drink, congratulated him.

"Great stuff," he said. "A perfect job. Now here's what I'm going to do." He pulled out a clip of five one-hundred dollar bills from his pocket and handed them to Tio. "That's all I have. You keep the diamond. How's 'at?"

"It's too hot to handle," Tio replied. "I'd rather have the money."

"Well, let it cool off," Corbo said testily. "Or just keep it. Anyway, that's all the money I've got. You ought to be pleased. Five hundred cash, and an eight-thousand dollar stone. For a night's work. Pretty good, if you ask me."

"All right," Tio said. He could see no point whatever in arguing. "Thank you, senator."

"Thass right. You ought to work for the government, boy."

"After I've had more practice," Tio said.

The edge of his jubilation was blunted. The five hundred dollars wasn't enough for Amelia's redecoration, and there was no profit for himself. He didn't know what to do with the diamond. It would take a long time to dispose of anything so well known, and it would always be risky. It wasn't his fault, but the fact remained that the results of his work weren't up to his usual standard.

He returned to the dance floor, for one dance with Agnes, as he had promised.

She danced well and leaned cosily against him with closed eyes; then as the dance neared its end she smiled and said: "You're really very nice, Mr. Lopez. I don't suppose we'll see you again, but I'm glad we met you."

"Maybe——" Tio began; but he did not finish: standing on the edge of the dance floor, staring at him, was Amelia. Beside her was Captain Molina, who had made the ill-starred suggestion of a refreshing drink.

It was the captain who faced the situation with the most poise.

"Your wife and I have looked everywhere

Continued on page 70

Hide and seek with the atom bomb

by Dr. P. E. HODGSON

Three nations are hoarding destruction that can be hidden in a box. An atom scientist asks: can the world control it?

IN THE LAST TWO DECADES, the release of the energy within the atom has increased a millionfold the destructive power of the explosives known to man. The atomic bombs dropped on Japan were about a thousand times as powerful as the largest high-explosive bombs. The hydrogen bomb is about a thousand times more powerful again. One aeroplane can now cause more destruction than was wrought on Germany from the air during the whole of the second World War.

In a few hours, a hostile force could devastate a prosperous nation, kill a large proportion of its inhabitants and shatter its economic structure, perhaps beyond repair. It is possible that a war in which nuclear weapons were used would render the earth unfit for human habitation.

The problem that faces the statesmen and scientists of the world is whether it is possible to create an international organization to control the production of atomic power and to ensure that it is never again used in war.

Early this year, a series of meetings of the United Nations Sub-Committee on Disarmament was held in London to consider it. Reports of these discussions have recently been published and seem to indicate that this attempt advanced a little farther than previous efforts to promote international trust.

The conditions for success are known. A plan for the control of atomic power in warfare must satisfy two requirements: it must be technically sound, and there must exist a certain amount of mutual trust between the nations.

Take the first requirement. Can there be a plan that is technically sound? Is it possible for a control organization to ensure that there is no secret manufacture of bombs?

To answer these questions it is convenient to divide the process for making bombs into two stages. The first includes the mining of the uranium ore and the separation of the fissile uranium that can be used to make bombs from the non-fissile uranium that cannot. Uranium ore is usually rather low-grade, so the mines are large and cannot be hidden. The uranium separation process is an extremely complicated one, needing very large factories, and these also cannot be concealed.

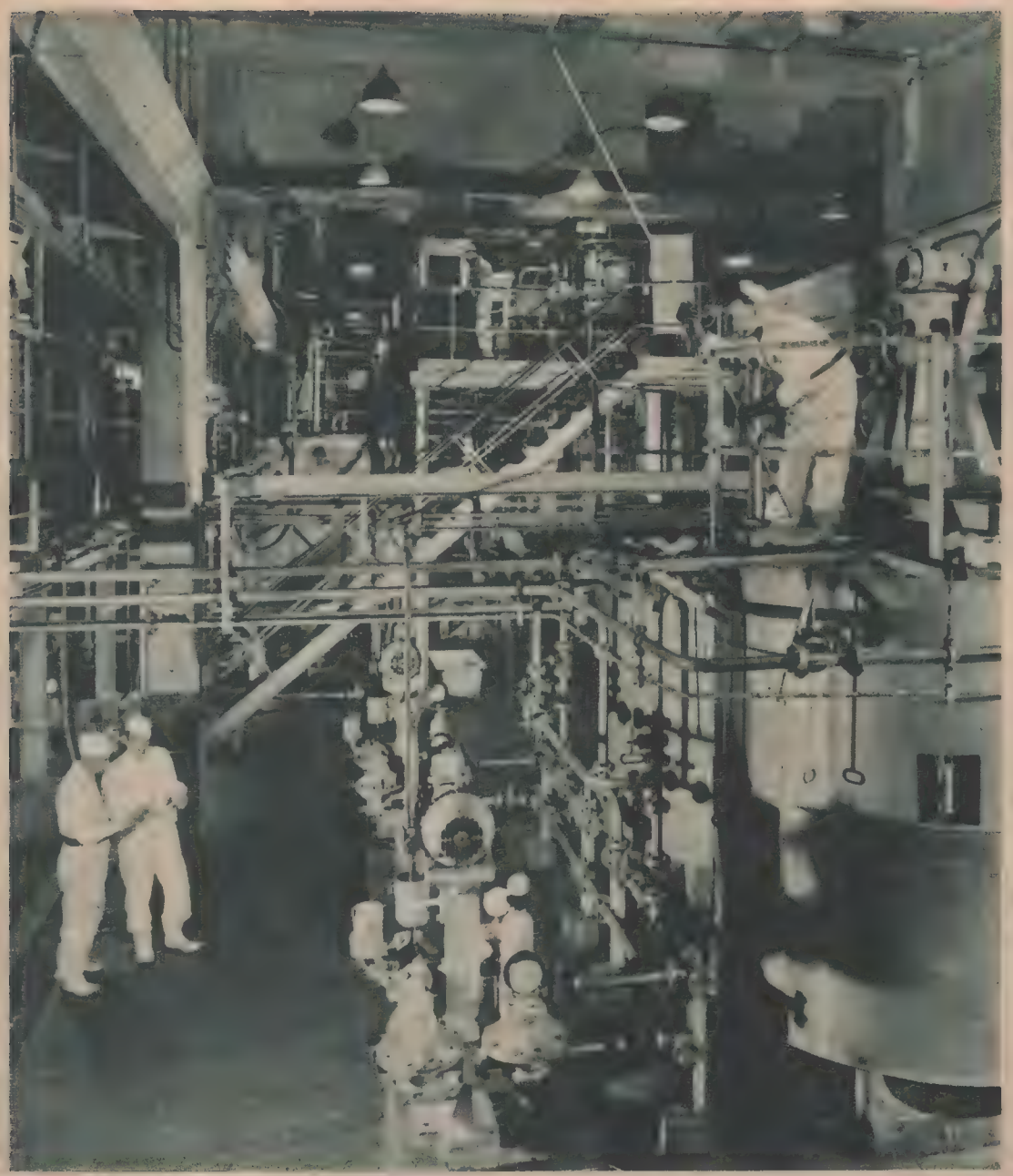
At the second stage, concealment is easier. Once the fissile material has been produced in concentrated form, it can be made into a bomb in quite a small plant that could be hidden without much difficulty. It would, therefore, be essential to ensure that no fissile uranium was diverted from the large refining factories. This would not be difficult to do if a sufficient number of highly trained inspectors were available, and if they were allowed full and continuous access to all the factories, and freedom to take samples and make measurements at all stages of production.

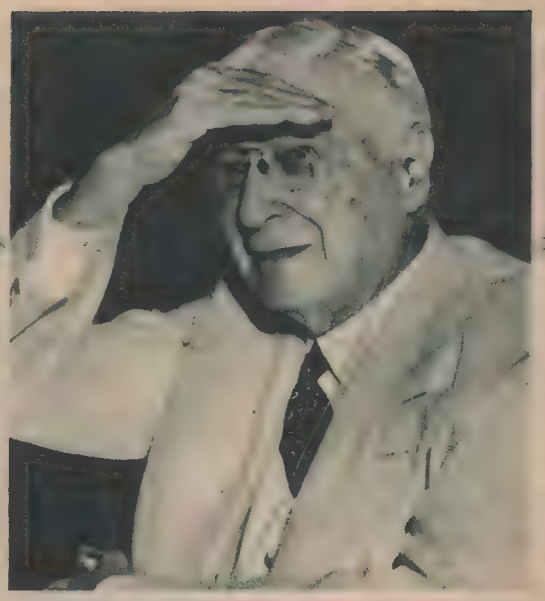
Similar arguments apply to the other fissile material, plutonium, which is made by a rather different process.

All this is feasible, and has been known to be feasible, since the problem of controlling atomic warfare was first tackled immediately after the last war. At that time, most of the atomic scientists wanted to forget about bombs and return to their secluded university lives. But many of them felt that they had a deep responsibility to do all in their power to see that the fruit of their wartime labours was never again used for destruction.

So, led by Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer, who

The problem of promoting mutual trust now rests with the statesmen—Bulganin and Eisenhower in particular. After the war, scientists gave the lead, says Dr. Hodgson, who at twenty-six is one of Britain's most brilliant atom scientists





Bernard Baruch, the American statesman, gave his name to a plan based on a report by scientists

Under the 1946 Baruch Plan, atomic factories like this one at Springfields, Lancashire, would be internationally controlled. Russia rejected the proposal and countered with one of her own

At Los Alamos, Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer directed atomic research. He mooted the control plan

directed the Los Alamos Laboratory, heart of the atom bomb project, a group in the United States began an intensive study of the problem of bringing about the international control of atomic energy. The result was the Lilienthal Report.

The same problem was later studied by the Scientific and Technical Committee of the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. It presented a unanimous report, published on September 26, 1946, which concluded that it could not find any basis in the available scientific facts for supposing that effective control was not technologically feasible.

The Lilienthal Report formed the basis of the Baruch Plan, which was presented to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission on June 14, 1946.

The Baruch Plan suggested the establishment of an International Atomic Development Authority to control all stages of the development and use of atomic energy. The authority would either manage or own all atomic energy projects dangerous to world security, and would have power to control, inspect and license all other atomic activities. It would also foster the beneficial uses of atomic energy and carry out research.

Its officials would be free to inspect at will the factories of all countries to ensure that no secret manufacture of bombs took place, and penalties were laid down for any nation violating this solemn agreement.

Finally the plan proposed that, when control was operating effectively, the manufacture of bombs should cease, existing stocks should be disposed of by agreement between the nations, and that the authority should be given full information on further atomic energy production.

At that time, the United States was the only nation manufacturing atomic bombs, so the initiative for international control had to come from there. The Baruch Plan was drafted in the United States and presented to the United Nations by its delegate. And the United States offered to publish details of its atomic technology and to destroy its bombs as soon as the authority was in a position to ensure that no other nation was making them.

Most of the United Nations welcomed the Baruch Plan. The Soviet Union did not.

There were several reasons why the Baruch Plan did not look as attractive to Russia as to the other nations. It was conceivable to the Russians that, after they had allowed international inspection of their country, the United States might withdraw from the plan and refuse to destroy its bombs. This would have given the Americans a great deal of information about Russian military installations and atomic development, without the Russians learning a corresponding amount about the United States. For Russia was closed and secret, the United States open to travellers. And the Americans had published reports on their atomic research, whereas the Russians had published little.

Then the authority, which would certainly be dominated by non-Communist nations, would have great power over the industries of all countries. The Russians feared that it might try to retard the economic development of the Soviet Union.

These two objections might have been met by modifications of the Baruch Plan if the Russians had not rejected it outright. But they did so, on the grounds that it did not provide for the immediate abolition of atomic weapons, that the inspection procedures would be an unwarrantable interference with the internal affairs of states, and that the proposed penalties for violators overrode the veto of the Security Council.

The Russians replied with their own scheme, presented to the United Nations by Mr. Gromyko on June 19, 1946. Their plan was an immediate agreement not to use atomic weapons in any circumstances, to prohibit the production of bombs and to destroy all existing stocks. The second part of the Russian proposals considered the composition and functions of a control organization.

The Western Powers pointed out that the Russian plan was only a paper guarantee, while the whole point of the Baruch Plan was to provide something more. Critics of the Soviet Union were also not slow to declare that the probable underlying motive of the Russian plan was to cancel, at one stroke, the United States' military supremacy.

Discussion of these two views on international

Continued on page 61

The merry widow of Bralloughby

by ***CLIVE BURNLEY***

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

Oh, she was brazen—but so delightful! With Two-Gun Bugsy's help, she was irresistible

LIONEL STRIFE HARRINGTON was a stiff sort of man, military-faced and upright, smacking his heels down *biff* on the pavements he walked on, standing no nonsense. And, since nonsense is so amusing, it followed that he had no perceptible sense of humour.

Neither had Albert Spotswood, for that matter, a remarkable deficiency in a publican. Spotswood looked like an elder of one of the grimmer sects, prided himself on being a Man of Principle, and kept the Rising Sun at Bralloughby Travers.

Bralloughby, of course, is the village that is always figuring in magazine articles entitled "Our Heritage," or "Homeland Beautiful."

The Rising Sun itself was as fine an example of brewer's Mock Tudor as had ever brought a sentimental vision of the Old Country before the eyes of American citizens of Middle European extraction, even if its beams were only quarter-inch casings of rough-finished hardwood enclosing rolled-steel joints.

Lionel Strife Harrington was an officer—they were all officers at the County Hall. He was, in fact, assistant planning officer in the county council planning department. Strife Harrington was very conscious of his mission in life, which was to tidy up an unkempt world. He was also fully aware of the proper dignity which he and the county council ought to maintain.

Nothing could be more dignified, for example, than the green and white enamelled plaques, with their borders of laurel leaves and embossed Roman lettering, which the county council distributed for attachment to buildings of historic interest; such as the one, for example, which it placed upon the Rising Sun at Bralloughby, and which read:

JOHN BREADWORTH
HISTORIAN
LIVED HERE
1785-1792

Which was all very well, up to a point. If Albert Spotswood had been the genial innkeeper of tradition, instead of a tall, balding, vinegar-faced retired ironmonger, this mural decoration might well have passed unnoticed by the rest of the village, which had never heard of Breadworth anyway.

But Spotswood was not popular. In the general sideshow which the village had become, most traders were compelled to use guile and charm in equal proportion to levy their tolls upon the tourist; whereas Spotswood, who thought both guile and charm sinful and also heartily despised the geese who brought him their golden eggs, had his too-plentiful trade funnelled into his bars by the configuration of the road, the extent of his car park, and the strident black-and-white façade of his house.

It was, therefore, considered most unfair, locally, that his virtually unpassable pub should have the added distinction which the plaque gave to it.

The landlord of the other Bralloughby inn, the New Inn, was the first to take action. The New Inn, as was only to be expected, was the oldest house in the village, a tottering pile leaning inwards upon itself, with moss growing on the roof, and car park accommodation for three motor-bikes.

Soon after the plaque had appeared upon the wall of the Rising Sun, old Tim Busby, the landlord of the New Inn, wrote to the people who had supplied his new doorplates, and in due course received a plaque in blue and white tinplate which read:

JOE WEATHERBY
WORLD-FAMOUS POET
AND KING OF POACHERS
USED THIS HOUSE

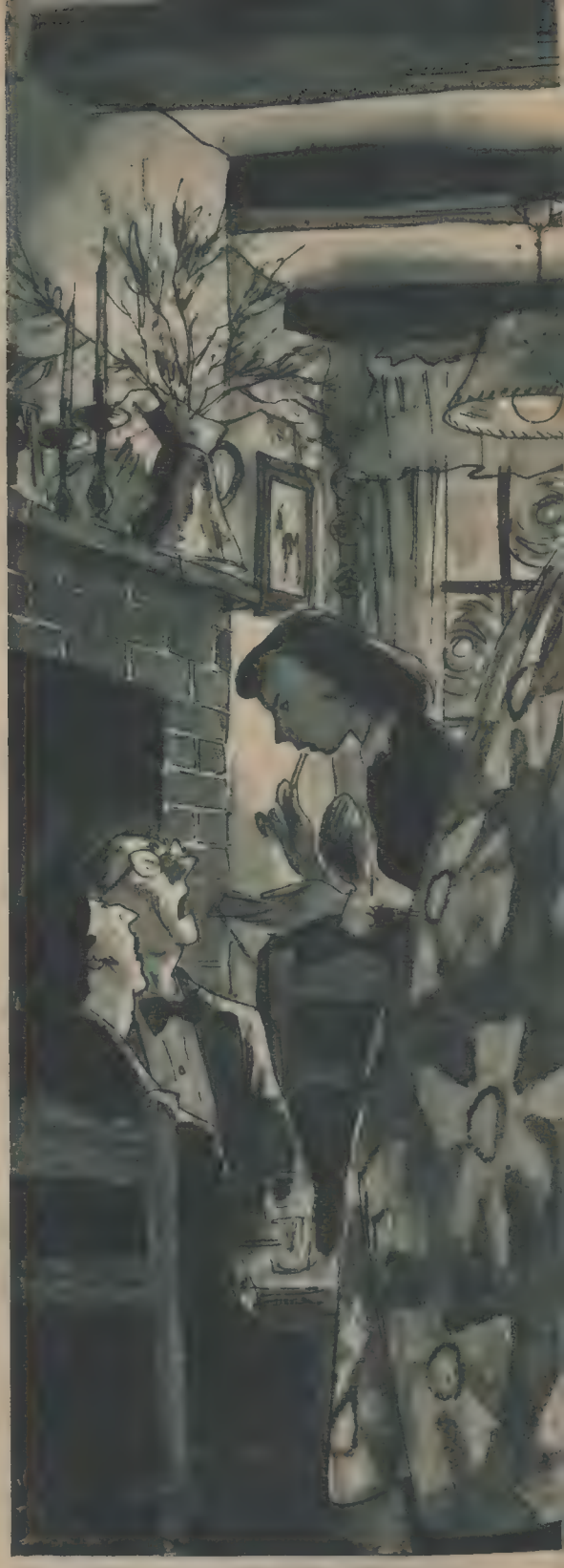
That really started it. In next to no time Two-Spike Marlow thought this new fashion worth following. He was called Two-Spike because he had left three fingers of his right hand at El Alamein. He sold watch-straps, souvenir ashtrays, knicks and knacks and trinkets of all kinds behind the bow-fronted window which he had let into Daisy Cottage.

OCCASIONALLY, too, Two-Spike sold little wood-carvings—he had taken to chiselling timber as occupational therapy while recovering from his injury. And one evening he sat down and commenced to hack out from rock-hard oak the very fine disc which he later fixed over his door. It read:

THE BIRTHPLACE OF
E. N. MARLOW
PHILOSOPHER AND BARITONE

Thus Bralloughby's rash of plaques started. But it was, of course, left to Mrs. Winifred Redge to outdo everyone. Mrs. Redge was the young, copper-haired widow who ran the Old Mill House Tea Rooms, a whirling girl, always in a gay hurry, making a lively ballet of life.

Many of the villagers wondered how much more than £60-a-week-clear Mrs. Redge made from toasted tea-cakes and tins of baked beans, but none expected logic or cool reason from her. Few were, therefore, surprised when she erected a fine embossed plaque in black, red and white



Poor old Harrington! With Mrs. Redge shining

silicon aluminium, bearing in Olde Englyshe characters the legend:

J. MILTON
WAS BORN
IN THIS HOUSE

It was after this fourth plaque had been erected that Albert Spotswood rang up the county council to protest at such fraudulent competition.

And Mr. Lionel Strife Harrington, to whom he eventually spoke, entirely agreed with what he said.

This plague of plaques was a scandalous state of affairs, likely to bring the antiquarian efforts of the council into disrepute, and he would personally see to it that these spurious signs, which were certainly unauthorized advertisements within the meaning of the Act, were removed.

Accordingly, Mr. Harrington drove down one morning fully determined to quash this outrageous uprising at Bralloughby.

He called first at the New Inn, ready to bludgeon all opposition by his usually unfailing trick of reciting with great earnestness passages

down like a sun lamp he almost forgot why he'd come. "The very man I want to see," she said. Harrington was lost. He'd never expected a woman like this

from the Town and Country Planning Act which he had memorized for such occasions.

He took a small whisky, which may or may not have been poured from the asbestos bottle they were alleged to keep at the tavern, and straight away informed Tim Busby that he was displaying an unauthorized advertisement, which would have to be removed, adding that the county archivist could find no record of that world-renowned poet, Joe Weatherby.

"Well, then," said old Tim, leaning his hairy forearms, tattooed in rather doubtful taste, on the bar, "you'd better send that county what's-his-name along here. Why, I knew Joe Weatherby better than me own father."

Then Tim thrust his large moon face at Harrington, impaling him with a glance as compelling as the Ancient Mariner's. "I'll tell you about Joe," he said.

And he did, in a loud and rapid monotone, raising his tone the instant he sensed an attempt at interruption. Tim did not confine himself to simple biographical details—birth, works, epitaph, but spoke intimately and personally of Joe Weatherby, the man.

In addition, whenever Harrington looked like making a really determined effort to interrupt, Tim interpreted his motions as additional orders, and slid slugs of Mountain Dew into the planning officer's glass, after which he airily waved away proffered payment, regardless of his profits.

Mr. Lionel Strife Harrington, who was himself much given to words, had never before been subjected to such a prolonged bombardment of syllables.

And worse was to come, for Tim now began calling all sorts of improbable-looking characters in from his public bar to testify to the reality of Joe Weatherby.

THEY backed him up nobly. Quite a number who had read the plaque definitely asserted that Joe had been a poet.

"It was him that wrote Shakespeare, not that feller Bacon," said old Crabstock, the hedger and ditcher.

Joe Margaretting, the soft-drinks traveller with the Battle of Britain moustache and the mild spaniel's eye—which he winked at Tim—brought the talk full circle by referring to Joe's achievements as a poet. He even recited some lines from the Master's best-known works, such as:

> Earth has nothing to show more fine
> Than Bralloughby Travers at half-past nine.

and:

> It matters not how short the quart,
> How charged with chlorophyll the pot,
> I can't keep sober when I ought,
> And fourteen days is what I got.

Poor Strife Harrington! He was borne down by the constant impact of words which were all the more confusing because they were nonsense. He was also rather alarmed at the quantity of whisky he seemed to be drinking. In the end he fled abruptly, uttering unheard threats of ministerial wrath.

The habitués of the New Inn somehow managed to contain their laughter until Mr. Harrington was out of earshot.

The planning officer had been routed, but he doggedly returned to the attack. A little demoralized but palely resolute, he entered Two-Spike Marlow's shop.

Marlow was a little terrier of a man. He went

Down the road they came like a funeral procession, led by Mr. Spotswood, gloomy as any undertaker. One thing was plain: there was trouble ahead for the village

a dangerously unnatural shade of pink, a cosmetic sort of colour, when he heard the accusation about his plaque.

"Calling me a liar is one thing, mister," he said. "But saying I don't dam' well exist is another. Maybe I'm not in *Who's Who*, but I can show you my name three years running in the yearbook of the South Raving Bird Fanciers' Association. Or you can ask Somerset House who was born in this very house on October 30, 1915.

"And I can call my house what I like, I suppose? If I choose to change it from Daisy Cottage to Birthplace of E. N. Marlow, what's it to do with anyone but me and the Post Office? Unauthorized advertisement is it? I've a good mind to give you an unauthorized poke in the eye. Then you *would* have something to sing about!"

But instead of poking him unauthorizedly in the eye, to Harrington's relief Two-Spike Marlow went into the inner part of the shop, slamming the door. Harrington waited long enough to show that he wasn't running away in fear, and then, more demoralized than ever, drove down the High Street to call at the tea rooms of Mrs. Redge.

His spirits rose a little at the thought of this encounter. Mrs. Redge was only a weak widow woman, a far less formidable opponent than those he had encountered so far. And he had a stronger case against her than he had against anyone else. That she should claim that Milton himself, one of the most illustrious and austere of England's bards, had lived in her house—the effrontery of it!

He stepped comparatively confidently into the crockery-clinking bustle of the Old Mill Tea House, where morning coffees were, at the moment, yielding ground to four-shilling three-course lunches.

Then a good deal of that confidence deserted him. He stood self-consciously in the main thoroughfare, where waitresses took him to be a rather diffident diner and tried to show him to tables, while customers assumed that he was a sort of head waiter and demanded that he show *them* to tables.

This went on until Mrs. Redge herself danced down upon him, with her glowing copper head and radiant smile. It was a smile that became an expression of the utmost delight when she heard who he was. She whirled him away to an empty corner table, and for a moment Lionel Strife Harrington almost forgot why he had come. It wasn't easy to remember such mundane details while Mrs. Redge was standing there shining down on him like a sun lamp.

"The county planning department!" she exclaimed, with every sign of jubilation. "The very man I want to see!"

"As a matter of fact," Harrington said, "what I have come about is——"

"Only the other day I sent in for planning permission for my milk bar annexe," Mrs. Redge swept on. "In the old orchard, you know. Quite in keeping, of course, overwhelmingly Tudor——"

"As a matter of fact——" Harrington said faintly.

"I sent in loads of forms and drawings," Mrs. Redge told him earnestly. "The builder's all ready, and I've ordered the horse brasses and warming pans for the walls and I simply *must* open before the season is too far advanced—so do you think you could get your office boy or whoever it is that signs the things to do it pretty quickly? Mark it 'Rush,' or 'Priority' or something."

"The plaque," Harrington said, summoning all his strength. "The plaque on your wall——"

"Oh, that!" cried Mrs. Redge, laughing. "It's rather impressive, don't you think? Much better than anyone else's."

"But, Mrs. Redge, the county council——"

"Do excuse me," Mrs. Redge said, "but I can see Hilda's getting into an awful muddle over there—she tries so hard, too. I do hope you haven't lunched—I'll send a waitress over at once, and please consider yourself my guest. Oh, I insist! It really has been so nice to talk to you."

So Mr. Lionel Strife Harrington stayed for lunch, not only because he could eat for nothing and put ten and sixpence down on his expenses, but also because he felt he had not completed his mission. He watched Mrs. Redge as she gaily unmuddled Hilda and then went from table to table glowing over people.

Mr. Harrington prolonged his lunch as long as he dared, but at last he had to leave. The fact that Mrs. Redge had not returned to continue their conversation he took to be a final frustration.

He made an awkward attempt to pay the bill, but was not allowed to. He drifted out unhappily to his car.

He had one foot inside it when something resembling a funeral procession bore down on him. Foremost came Mr. Albert Spotswood, of the Rising Sun, long-faced enough for any undertaker. Two dismal and nondescript men followed, carrying what might have been the body, while there tagged along behind a dribble of boys and loungers. Finally, sauntering up pushing a tradesman's bicycle with a package on its tray, was Two-Spike Marlow.

Harrington suddenly realized that the two men were carrying the county council's green and white plaque from the Rising Sun, the one which commemorated the poet and historian Breadworth.

"Caught you in time, eh?" said Spotswood, with his usual lack of cordiality. "You'll have to take this thing back. It's a plain lie, and it's against my principles to have it on my place."

"My dear sir—a lie? Why, the county archivist——"

"Never mind any architect," said Spotswood. "It's a lie. There's not a brick in my place older than 1933. It was all rebuilt, on a new site, about

Continued on page 58

How you feel today depends on how you slept last night!

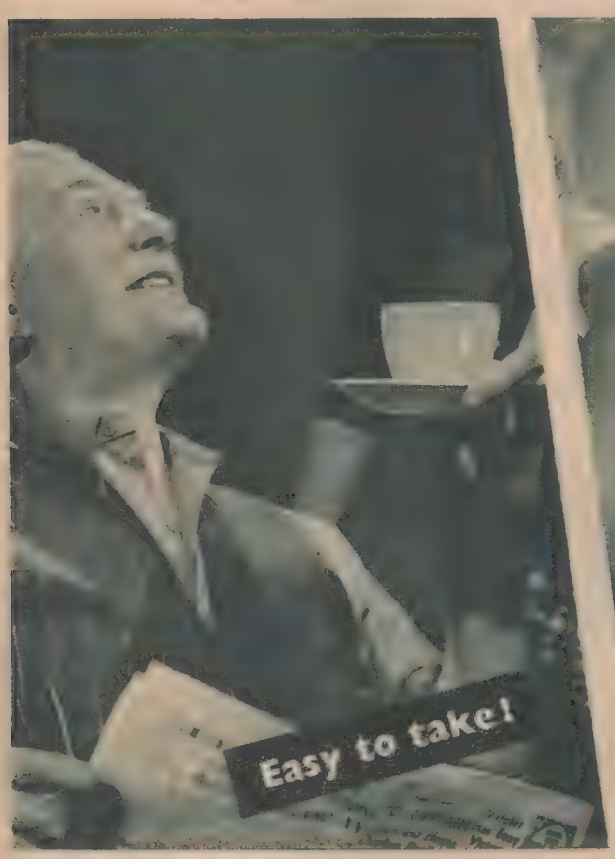
HOW DID *YOU* SLEEP LAST NIGHT? Whether you drive a lorry or work behind a desk nothing runs you down quicker than insufficient sleep. You feel tired out and depressed. And because you are tired your whole system is thrown out of gear. The metabolic process which recharges your body with nervous energy slows down. You start worrying and this also saps your energy and prevents you sleeping. There is only one way to break this vicious circle —your body and mind must learn to relax. ***And the best way to relax at night is to drink a comforting cup of Milo.***

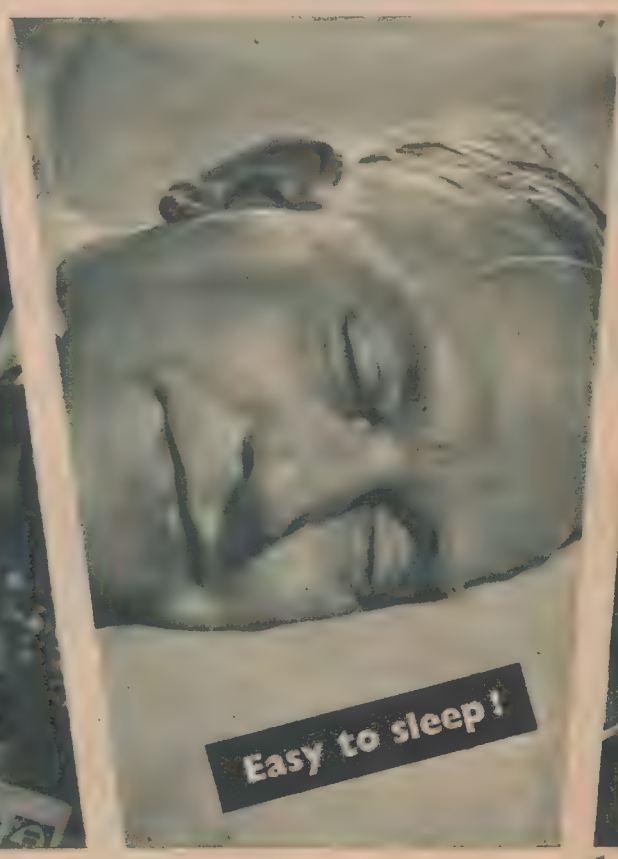
HOW MILO HELPS YOU Milo is the famous food drink made by Nestlé's. It's good—very good for relaxing people whose 'nerves' won't let them rest. Drink a cup of delicious chocolate-flavoured Milo tonight. The first thing you'll notice is a definite sense of increased well-being. That's Milo's concentrated goodness digesting easily into soothing nourishment. Now—relax. Let yourself succumb to delightful drowsiness as Milo's comforting warmth gently nudges you into sleep.

WHY MILO HELPS YOU Milo is the most modern food drink made today. You'll love its wholesome chocolate flavour. It tastes better. It has more in it. Milo is the pure concentrated goodness of full cream milk blended with malt extracts and added calcium, magnesium and sodium phosphates, magnesium glycerophosphate, yeast, Vitamin D and Vitamin B_1. This is why Milo packs so much more soothing nourishment per ounce.

START TONIGHT Let's say it once more. How you feel tomorrow depends on how well you sleep tonight, But you can start doing yourself some good today. You can buy exactly the same brand of Milo (made by Nestlé's) as used in hospitals and nursing homes at your nearest chemist or grocer. We strongly recommend Milo as a delicious drink at all times. Everyone enjoys it for 'elevenses'. Children love it for breakfast. But above all . . . Milo helps you sleep better. Buy some to day.

Each ounce of MILO contains a minimum of 0.45 milligrams of Vitamin B_2, and 320 I.U.s of Vitamin D, together with 125 milligrams each of Calcium and Phosphorus.





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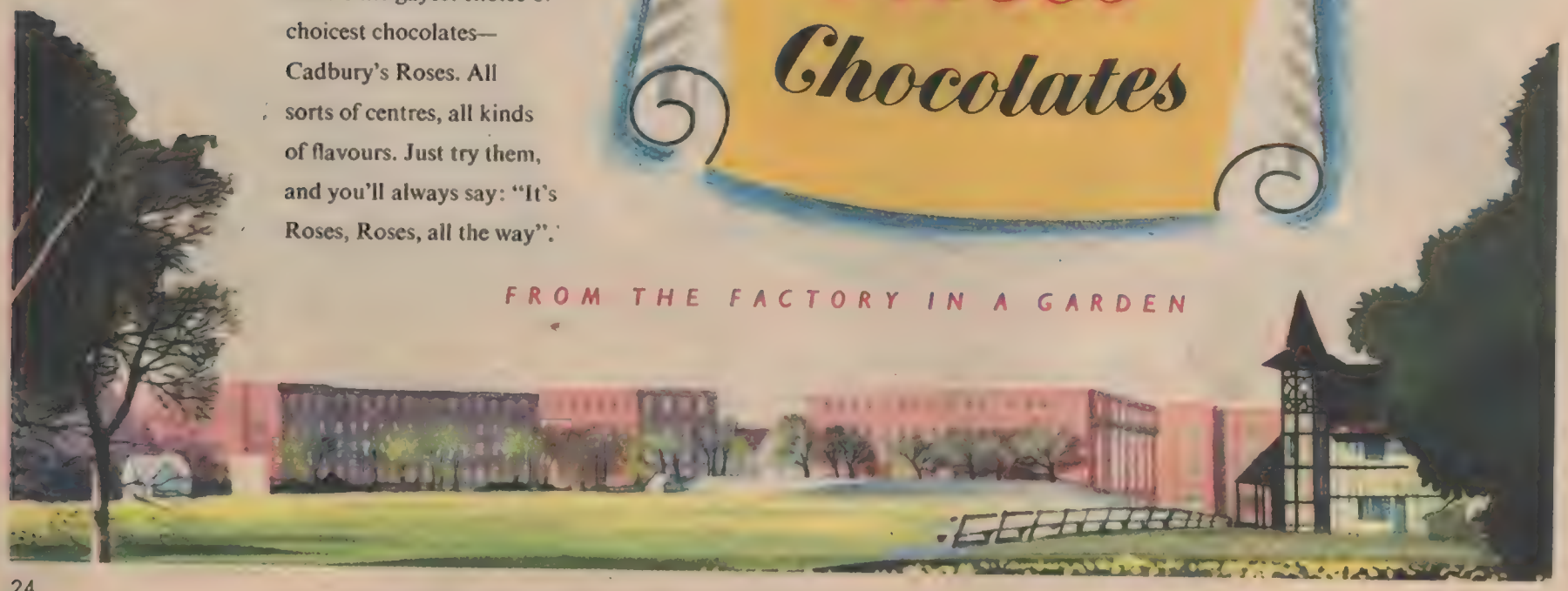

Artist with a palate

by ANTONY FERRY

André Bouvet hasn't enjoyed a square meal in twenty years. But he is always tasting—for perfection

WHEN A YOUNG WOMAN ordered fresh trout recently at the Boulestin Restaurant, near London's Covent Garden market, she was ceremoniously conducted to the kitchen. There, André Bouvet, the chef, was waiting beside a glass tank of live, cultivated trout for the client to make her choice.

Bouvet caught the small but well-fed specimen that she asked for, manoeuvred it on to the chopping block and raised his long knife to perform the first of a series of delicate transformations which would result in a dish called *La Truite Vivante au Bleue*. It sells for 8s. 6d.

Suddenly, the woman changed her mind. Bouvet had to put the reprieved trout back in the tank and seek among three dozen other slithering specimens for an alternative choice.

His knife, however, was stayed a second time. "Pick another one," the young woman said. "I'll go back to the dining-room. If I saw it before it was cooked, I couldn't bear to eat it."

Chefs whose prestige in the profession is as high as Bouvet's are notorious for their raging tempers. Bouvet, however, remains strangely placid, even though his own high standards invite catastrophe every moment of the cooking day.

During the trout selection incident, for example, a plate of duck, cooked with orange, was held up at the serving table because one of Bouvet's strictest rules is that no dish can be served to the client until the chef himself has tasted and given his approval.

Although fragrant steam still issued from the dish when Bouvet finally sampled it, he pronounced it to be unsatisfactory. "Cold," he said.

NOT only was the order made again from raw, freshly-killed duck, but Bouvet rushed to the dining-room, apologized for the delay and then, without any apparent loss of calm, returned to his stove to prepare the trout.

Bouvet's staff consists of four *sous-chefs* and two kitchen porters, none of whom ever achieves his serenity. Continually he admonishes them: "A fiery temper adds nothing to the cooking of a dish. Rather if you work well and with order, the work advances well. Order is the important thing."

Bouvet is a thin, pale man with serene eyes. He comes from Lyons, in the South of France, and, at thirty-five, is the youngest of the top ten chefs in London. He is rated as a master-chef. He could earn £50 a week in the kitchens of a luxury hotel, but he prefers to remain at the

Continued on page 69

A customer who ordered *La Truite Vivante au Bleue* at the Boulestin Restaurant chooses the fish from a tank in the kitchen. Bouvet samples every dish before it is sent to the dining-room

Bouvet (right) allows no pre-cooking; nothing is prepared until it is ordered. He says that if two chickens are browned together to save time, the result is "tasteless mass-production"

The coincidence was absurd. I stared at the strange, squatting figure, and my lips involuntarily spoke a name. He answered me softly in Urdu

My job was to catch the thief. And here he was, confessing his guilt and defying me to arrest him. He could afford to laugh. Two things just didn't go together—the law and . . .

Macpherson

by ALAN JENKINS

ILLUSTRATED BY BATCHELOR

GLASGOW IS A NOBLE CITY, Great Britain's second heart; but it is no place to spend a Sunday evening. I had come down from a fishing holiday on Loch Earn. It was my own fault, of course, for failing to understand railway timetables; but I found myself with three hours and twenty minutes to kill before my train moved off from Central Station.

I managed to make dinner last just over an hour, and two double whiskies last forty minutes. Then black depression and a wild impatience to be home took hold of me, and there was nothing for it but to get drunk, which I am not good at, or to go for a walk. I chose the walk.

The Clyde by night was a moonless limbo with snakes of yellow light laid across it. The dead skeletons of cranes reared up beyond King George V Bridge.

My shoes rang and scuffed along the cobbled Broomielaw as I walked in the fine rain. I would walk for twenty minutes, I thought, and then turn back. This was one of the world's great waterfronts, I told myself, and it should be seen at night.

I saw two coloured sailors leaning against a warehouse wall, one of them crooning huskily to himself. After that, I saw no one else, until suddenly I tripped and nearly fell headlong. I had stumbled over a pair of feet.

They belonged to a man in a turban, squatting in a niche in the wall, his head sunk upon his chest. He wore a shirt, an old pair of trousers, a tattered leather waistcoat.

A lorry clattered past, and by its headlights I saw his face for the first time. Or rather, I saw a dark, wrinkled cheek, a long scar, and a crumpled mess where his right ear had once been.

I wanted to murmur "I'm sorry," but my lips involuntarily spoke a name: "Noor Mohamed!" He answered me softly in Urdu.

The coincidence was so absurd that neither of us was surprised. Unless this were a dream, I had last seen Noor Mohamed thirteen years ago, six thousand miles away. . . .

Northern Bihar, India, 1942. Every afternoon, at half past three precisely, the monsoon stopped for an hour or so. Black clouds turned to light grey; a clammy breeze blew among the mango trees where our great bell tents were pitched; and the tea-sellers came out lazily from their thatched-roof canteen. They carried ancient tea urns and baskets of grubby egg sandwiches, slung on yokes across their shoulders.

"*Garam char*—hot tea, good, good!" they droned, lifting the flap of each tent. Soldiers raised themselves limply from their string beds, splashing the rainpools off the steaming canvas as their heads touched the roof, and got out their rusted tin mugs—two annas, full; one anna, half full.

We were a malarious, mepacrine-crazed Scottish battalion sitting out the summer in sandy monsoon mud. I had been attached temporarily from Divisional Headquarters. I was a security n.c.o. and I had come here to find out what had happened to Fusilier Macshane's rifle.

Macshane was now languishing in the guard tent, pending a court of inquiry. There was no question of his having "lost" his rifle. Either he had sold it, or it had been stolen. Macshane, of course, swore that it had been stolen. It was fairly certain that the buyer or the thief was someone in the camp, for the nearest town was thirty miles away.

"*Charwallah! Char garam* — two anna, sahib!"

Our charwallahs were nearly all Pathan, tall, lean, pale, with small moustaches. They all claimed military service, proudly showing their wounds. They all carried testimonials from British officers. And they seemed to have money, though heaven knew where they kept it. Malak, the little Punjab sub-contractor at Brigade H.Q., hated them, said they were all murderers and thieves.

Murderers? It didn't matter. Thieves? That was what I had to find out.

There was Akhbar Din, the oldest and smallest, who sold fruit as well as tea, shouting all day: "Nineteen-fourteen banana *wallah*!" to show his length of service. Lal Mohamed, the youngest and slimmest, with his naughty girlish face. Wizened old Nand Ali, the comedian of the bunch, who called us Rajah, General, Babuji, in flattery; he sold flyblown pastries which he called queenie-cakes. And there was Macpherson, long-armed and thick, like a gorilla.

Macpherson's real name was Noor Mohamed. His right ear was missing: the stump, like the heart of a lettuce, merged into a fearful scar that ran all down his neck. His pugaree only partially hid the scrofulous bald patch on his head. He spoke smooth, quiet English with—incredibly—a Scottish accent.

I was pretty sure that Macpherson was my number one suspect, even though it was Malak who had put the idea into my head.

"You old soldier, sir?" Macpherson smiled, the first time we talked.

"No."

"I did not think so. You are *babu*—educated. And you speak Urdu."

ALREADY we were on dangerous ground. Useless to pretend I was a Scottish fusilier, despite the hackle on my topee; and unnecessary, for the battalion had a high proportion of cockneys and Yorkshiremen, reinforcements after our Madagascar casualties. I stuck to my story that I was a welfare official, and inspected the canteen daily to further that impression.

But the Pathans were not deceived. Like the regimental police, I was baksheeshed with free tea and potato chips. I was obviously on the list of persons to be kept sweet.

I began to think I had bungled the job already. Then I reflected that in all systems of crime prevention, hunters and hunted are known to one another, often on the friendliest terms; and so, for the time being, I allowed myself to be corrupted.

"You speak very good English, Macpherson," I remarked one night, as we squatted in the paraffin-lit canteen.

Macpherson was pretending to be drunk, to humour Lance-Corporal Price, who was genuinely tipsy after only two bottles of pale ale. Macpherson's smooth respect was gone. Roaring with laughter, he was flinging his arms around Price's neck and calling him "my old mate."

Why was he making up to Price, I wondered? Was Price destined to become another Macshane? I joined in the hilarity, waiting for a clue.

NOW Price fell suddenly asleep. Macpherson, tired of playing drunk, became soft and confidential.

"I not speak English," he winked. "Scotch! . . . I was five years canteen manager with the Argyll and Inverness Light Infant-er-ee Regiment. Good boys, very good boys. I like to be with the boys, sir! I could be rich, go to big city and make money. I'm no' stupid. But I don't care any more. I'm old soldier, sir. I just want to be with my mates."

Argyll and Inverness, I mused. Wasn't there an old soldier's tale about them? Wasn't it one of their battalions that had lost four hundred rifles in a railway hold-up near Jubbulpore in 1934?

If so, why was Macpherson talking about them?

He must surely know that the mere mention of the A.I.L.I. would put thoughts of stolen rifles into my head. Or was it a super-subtle way of allaying my suspicions of him? Had he guessed the reason for my being here, and was amusing himself by forcing me to show my hand? Was he, perhaps, about to cut me in on a deal? Or was he, quite blatantly and contemptuously, telling me what he was going to do?

"I got twelve years' service, sir," he was saying; and he showed me, all over again, his scars and tattoos, with the usual boasting about the North-West Frontier.

I changed the subject. "Your mate's pretty well out," I said, indicating Price's body on the floor.

Macpherson laughed. "Ay, he's my mate. He knew me in Port Glasgow before the war."

That shook me. "What were you doing in Scotland?"

So that was where he had got his Scots accent from!

"I was a bagman," he said. I didn't catch the word at first. "A bagman, you understand—I went aboot wi' a wee box fu' o' things. Rugs, fountain pens, anything. Selling 'em."

"No wonder you're so popular with the Glasgow boys," I said.

"Ay, that's why they call me Macpherson—me, old Noor Mohamed! I know Gorbals. I

know Sauchiehall Street," he murmured vaguely.

Well, everyone had heard of Gorbals and Sauchiehall Street, I thought. Maybe he was never there at all. Yet why should he bother to lie to me? I wasn't a Scot, and he knew it. And that word "bagman"—it sounded strangely genuine.

"Didn't you find Scotland rather cold?" I asked fatuously.

"No, sir, I don't feel cold. I don't feel anything much. Long as I'm wi' the boys, I'm okay."

The rain drummed and plopped all round, my ears sang with mepacrine stupor, and I was talking to a Pathan with a Scots brogue. It made no sense.

Macpherson's eyes were brilliant in the paraffin lamp's flickering light. He was grinning. I saw that he was rolling something in the palm of his hand.

It was a tommy-gun bullet.

"Where did you get that?" I asked quietly.

"One o' my mates give me. A present!" Macpherson shook with silent laughter. "Not this regiment. Another one, in Patna."

"You know you're not supposed to have it?" I said.

"Take it."

He pressed the round into my hand. "Present from Macpherson. What I want with tommy-gun? No good to me." His hand went into the folds of his long, loose coat and brought out something else. This time it was a Lee-Enfield round.

"That is gun I like," he said softly.

"Why do you want such a gun, Macpherson?"

He shrugged: "Shoot tiger in jungle, sir!"

His impudence was breath-taking. I could report him, have him sacked, and it still wouldn't find Fusilier Macshane's rifle.

I could feel him reading my thoughts. I remembered all the stories of arms thefts I'd ever heard: rifles vanishing while your back was turned, making their way 1,400 miles to Peshawar hidden in creaking ox-carts. And I felt a fool. I was no match for a Pathan. I was a green wartime soldier, six years out of school. Macpherson was simply playing with me, admitting his guilt and defying me to do anything about it.

I laughed it off, and went back to my tent to think.

There was only one way to catch him. There was a drill laid down for this sort of thing. Noor Mohamed—Macpherson—would have to be framed. He must be tricked into offering a soldier money for a rifle before concealed witnesses.

If he was as clever as I feared, he wouldn't fall for it. But if his worship of firearms and his greed to possess them were as overpowering as I hoped, then. . . .

Who was to be the decoy? Price was no good obviously.

IN the end, I settled on a certain Fusilier Gibb, the adjutant's batman, who came to me of his own accord one day and said that Macpherson had jokingly offered to pay him eight annas for three rounds of ammunition "to add to his collection."

Gibb, a grizzled, intelligent little man of nearly fifty, was briefed very thoroughly. He was to pal up with Price to begin with and thus become one of Macpherson's "mates." The time would surely come when Macpherson would roll bullets in his palm and make his casual joke about "shooting tiger in jungle." Gibb would then allow himself to be persuaded to do whatever Macpherson asked.

All this took about three weeks. Then one morning, when the pipe-major had sounded reveille, Gibb came to my tent. He said that he, Price and Macpherson had been drinking in the canteen the night before, and Macpherson had offered to buy not a rifle, but a lot of ammunition: fifty rounds.

It was disappointing, but it would do. It was enough to build up a case against Macpherson. And it suggested, more strongly than ever, that Fusilier Macshane's missing rifle was still in the camp.

Gibb had arranged to meet Macpherson in the bushes near Admin. Company lines next evening, when it would be dusk and the charwallahs would be coming round for the last time that day. The adjutant, Malak, the canteen manager, and I would be hidden nearby to overhear what took place. Having got Macpherson for buying ammunition, it shouldn't be difficult to force him to reveal the whereabouts of the missing rifle. And Malak's methods would be rougher than ours.

"*Garam char*—hot tea, good, two anna," the charwallahs droned as they went their rounds. And we saw one slow-moving turbaned figure making for Fusilier Gibb's rendezvous.

But it wasn't Macpherson.

It was young Lal Mohamed, his liquid eyes wide and innocent, explaining that Macpherson felt sick in his stomach and couldn't come to meet Gibb. Would we like some tea—two annas full, one anna half-full?

Malak reacted first. He sprang at Lal Mohamed and shook him until he squealed, shouting at him in a language I didn't understand: Pushtu, I suppose. Then he broke into a run, slithering over the steaming mud towards the canteen, yelling at the charwallahs and demanding to know where Macpherson was.

Macpherson was never seen again. Nor was the second rifle he had stolen—Fusilier Gibb's rifle, whipped from his tent while we were lying in wait.

India is the best and most baffling country in the world to hide in, even for a big Pathan with two British rifles. Two rifles that would be delivered to an agent in, say, Hazaribagh, who would bribe ox-cart drivers to take them to a bigger agent in the Central Provinces; so to Lucknow, Lahore, perhaps ultimately to rich Afghan or Baluchi tribesmen. . . .

No wonder Macpherson, with his lazy, brutal charm, "liked to be with the boys." So many times since then I had thought of him, wondering what he did for a living now there weren't any more British troops in India.

HE stood before me now, on the Clyde waterfront, his ugly face more lined, his body knottier and more shrunken, grinning politely. I put my hand into my trousers pocket and took out a small, round-nosed object, half the size of my thumb.

I know all the dangers of carrying live rounds on one's person, and I regret to say I have put soldiers on charges for doing it. But I had carried this one for thirteen years, and had come to regard it as a talisman: the tommy-gun bullet Noor Mohamed had given me in India—"a present from Macpherson."

He rolled it in his palm, just as he had done in India, and then handed it back to me.

"No mair guid, sir," he shrugged, and laughed. "No mair shoot wi' gun. All atom-bomb now!"

His eyes rested on me, and I wanted to ask him a hundred questions. Where he had been, what had happened to our stolen rifles, how he had got his cauliflower ear, how many jails he had been in, how many men he had killed, what in heaven's name had brought him from India back to Scotland.

But he had turned from me and was bending down busily to open a battered suitcase on the pavement.

"You like tae buy something?" He rummaged among shoelaces, brushes, combs, quack medicines and cheap notepaper, and held up a pocket comb.

I took it gravely, and gave him a pound—a pretty Scottish banknote, in delicate colours. He nodded, not attempting to give me any change, and made a perfunctory little salaam with the tips of his fingers.

"Macpherson—" I began.

A firm step sounded on the cobbles a hundred yards or so away, and when I looked again Noor Mohamed—Macpherson—was gone. Two dockside policemen came into view, and eyed me suspiciously. Macpherson and policemen were never meant to be in the same place.

I muttered "good night" to them, and looked at my watch.

I turned back along Broomielaw, to the fluorescent street lights, the moaning trams, the world of probability, and the train to London, due to leave in twenty minutes. THE END

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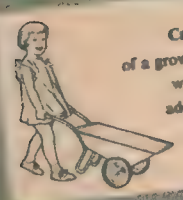

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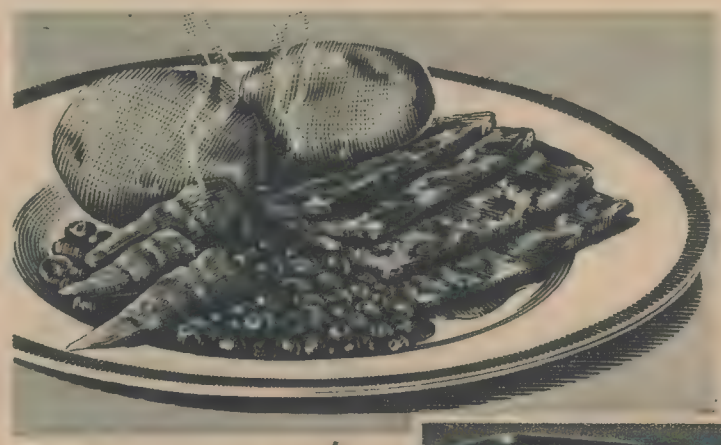

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GR 306C-1246

W. E. ARMSTRONG reveals the facts behind the new inquiry into . . .

THE SECRETS OF DOMINICI

Old Gaston is not the only guilty man. Yet a tangle of lies baffle the French police, and powerful influences suppress the facts. Whom are they trying to shield?

At his trial, Gaston Dominici was called both noble patriarch and squalid drunkard. About himself he said: "I always give blow for blow"

ON NOVEMBER 28 LAST YEAR at Digne in the French Basses Alpes, Gaston Dominici, a farmer from the parish of Lurs, was sentenced to death, on his own confession, for the triple murder of Sir Jack Drummond, his wife and their small daughter, Elizabeth. The crime had been committed more than two years before; the accused, at the time of the trial, was seventy-seven years old. Technically, Dominici can be executed whenever the authorities think proper.

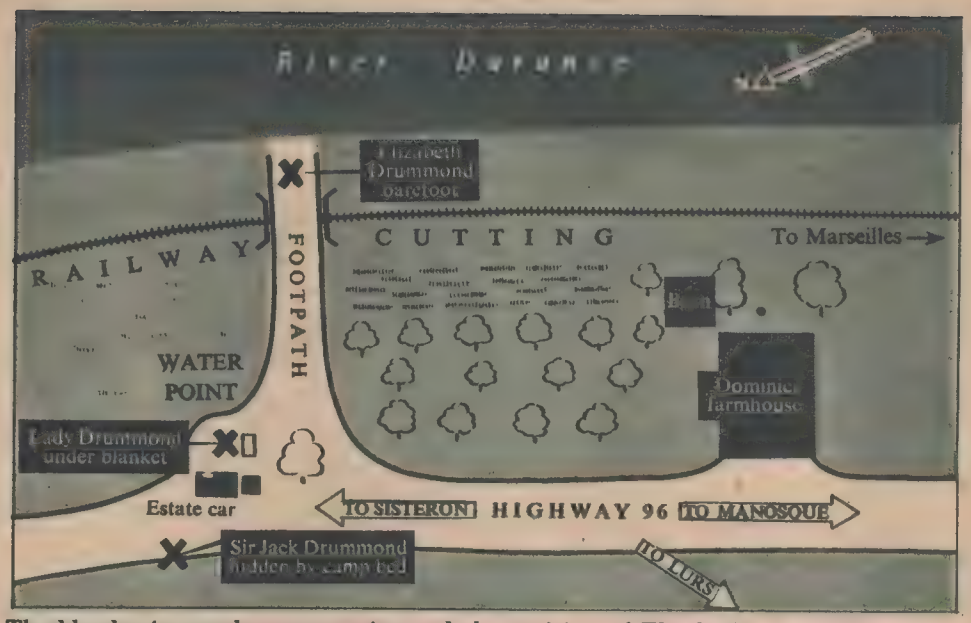
In fact, he will never go to the guillotine for two reasons: his great age and—what is far more important—the deep discontent which the verdict induced in French public opinion. Under British or American law, and on a case such as was produced by the French police, Dominici would not have been brought to trial; or, if brought to trial, would not have been convicted. Nevertheless, very few people in France believe him to be innocent. Even fewer, among those who believe him guilty, believe he is the only guilty one.

Two factors make the case unsatisfactory. One is that Gaston Dominici's confession does not correspond, on some crucial points, with the material evidence. The other is the impression held by both the public and the press that the Dominici family was shielded by powerful

The Drummond car (background) when the murders were discovered. No detectives came for twelve hours—while sightseers obliterated clues

Gaston's daughter-in-law Yvette. He claimed afterwards that she knew much more about the murders than she admitted at his trial

Gustave Dominici was ruled by Yvette, his wife. It was on her orders that he gave the evidence that helped to convict his father



The bloodstains at the water point and the position of Elizabeth's body (diagram is not to scale) are still-unexplained facts which upset the official view of the case

sectarian elements, and that those elements were Communist.

The accused man retracted his confession after being arrested. When he had been condemned to death, he went farther. He accused two of his relations—Gustave, his son, and Roger Perrin, one of his grandsons, a youth of fifteen at the time—of committing the murder. The Director of Public Prosecutions then yielded to a press campaign and asked the Home Secretary to institute a new inquiry. This was unprecedented in French judicial history.

The object of this new inquiry was not to correct a miscarriage of justice, but to make good a possible falling short. In official language it is a "Charge against persons unknown for complicity in the voluntary homicide of the Drummond family."

The inquiry was begun on January 4 this year, and two police commissioners, Chenevier and Gillard, of the Sûreté Nationale—the equivalent of Britain's Scotland Yard—were chosen to conduct it. They left for Lurs at once. Chenevier, a big, bluff man and a ready talker, has a reputation for charm and accessibility; Gillard, his assistant, smaller and thickset, is known to be a detective who "never lets go," a man who keeps tapping away at a case till something caves in and discloses the truth.

Chenevier and Gillard, to whom Dominici repeated his suspicions of Gustave and Roger Perrin—he also indicated that Gustave's wife, Yvette, knew a good deal more about the crime than she had admitted—have made little progress in their inquiry and have run up against the same obstacles which were encountered by their Provençal opposite numbers during the weeks which followed the crime.

On March 17 the Sûreté commissioners returned to Lurs with a list of four hundred questions to be put to the Dominici family. Much was expected of this interrogation, but Chenevier and Gillard spent only forty-eight hours in the district. Their four hundred questions were unasked because the examining magistrate at Digne—appointed since the trial—refused them a warrant of interrogation. Judge Carrias gave no explanation for his refusal, and the theory that the Dominicis were being protected by a powerful and mysterious influence took a stronger hold on the public mind.

This theory was further reinforced at the end of June. A long interview which the policemen had with Judge Carrias led the press to announce that the inquiry was to make progress at last. To the surprise of everyone concerned, Chenevier and Gillard, with unconcealed discontent, went back to Paris at once: the judge had again refused them access to Dominici's farm, La Grand-Terre. With this second refusal of a warrant, the inquiry to bring "charges against persons unknown" was thought to be ended.

But the police and public had reckoned without the Dominicis. If some of that numerous family—Gaston had nine children and sixteen grandchildren—were more than pleased to let matters rest where the trial had left them, others could not bring themselves to believe in the guilt of the "patriarch." One such was Leon Dominici, a nephew of the condemned man.

Leon, a man in his late thirties, does not fit into the Dominici mould. Known as the intellectual of the clan, he is a lorry driver and he sees more of the world and its usages than the restricted life of Provençal farming offers the rest of the family. Leon, who had impressed the public by his sincerity and detachment at the trial, succeeded in keeping the case alive to the extent of interesting Réné Floriot, France's most celebrated criminal lawyer, in the defence of Gaston.

With this weighty support, Leon managed to make himself heard by Advocate General Cordier, technical adviser to the Director of Public Prosecutions. This application to the highest authority rejuvenated the inquiry. Towards the end of July, Chenevier and Gillard went back to Digne, and this time Judge Carrias—presumably acting on higher instructions—gave them the necessary warrants.

Gustave Dominici and his wife Yvette were interviewed at length, as was Roger Perrin. These interrogations have so far been inconclusive; no new fact has emerged, but the inquiry continues. In October this year, when it was resumed after a temporary suspension, Chenevier and Gillard were back to the early hours of August 5, 1952, when the bodies of the Drummond family were found beside Route Nationale 96, running from Marseilles to Grenoble, about eighty yards from the River Durance and 150 from La Grande-Terre.

The alarm was given by a motor-cyclist called Olivier who was hailed by Gustave Dominici at about 5 a.m., just as it was getting light. Olivier got in touch with the nearest post of gendarmes. As a rule in France, crimes committed in the countryside are investigated by the gendarmerie whose men are usually from the district concerned. In the case of the Drummonds, however, it was thought advisable to communicate with the nearest "Mobile Brigade" of police, which was at Marseilles. Detectives from this force arrived on the scene twelve hours later.

From the outset, the Marseilles police had no

Continued on page 63

There's something better to eat in Summer County

More miles per sandwich...

Over fifty miles before lunch—makes you dream of the food that's waiting in those saddlebags! Not that a ride through the lanes of Summer County is dull—but neither is the thought of those lovely sandwiches you packed before seven this morning—particularly since there's Summer County Margarine (with butter in it) on every one . . .

Summer County Margarine—with butter in it

Margarine must serve many purposes. You spread it on bread; you lavish it on potatoes; you sink it deep into hot scones or toast; it marries the cheese to two halves of a roll; parties can be poor things without it. What good things these all are if the margarine is good—if the milk, the butter, the vitamins and vegetable oils have mingled to a flavour that is all country-freshness and purity. There is such a margarine—the margarine that country-folks themselves choose. Summer County Margarine . . .

Summer County Margarine

Contains 10% full-cream butter

SCY 24-1100-G

VAN DEN BERGHS & JURGENS LTD., LONDON, E.C.4.

Give a gay gift – give Sharps

equal shares - remember!

No need to pass them round: Mummy and I have a tin of our own. So you can tuck in to your heart's content. Yes. They're Sharp's. I know they're your favourites.

Sharps

SWEETS FOR CHRISTMAS

EDWARD SHARP & SONS LTD., OF MAIDSTONE, KENT
"The Toffee Specialists"

Give a gay gift – give Sharps

something extra for a wonderful wife

You've given the gift her heart was set on. Now sweeten the moment with that little extra something – it makes all the difference. Show how you appreciate her – give one of Sharp's gay gift tins. After all, isn't she extra special . . . ?

Sharps

TOFFEES FOR CHRISTMAS

EDWARD SHARP & SONS LTD., OF MAIDSTONE, KENT
"The Toffee Specialists"

FRENCH LEAVE

by P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

What a mess Freddie was in now! Here he was, almost about to commit bigamy, you might say, and all because he had acted like a gentleman

RARELY HAD THERE been such a scandal in the French resort of Roville. Monsieur Carpenter found hiding in a lady's hotel suite! That of the pretty American, Mlle Trent. . . .

There was, of course, a perfectly innocent explanation, but nobody listened to it. Terry Trent, chaperoned by Kate, her elder sister, had come to Europe for the holiday of a lifetime. And she had fallen in love with a struggling young writer: Jeff, the son of a penniless French marquis known as Old Nick.

Jeff and the marquis were staying at the same hotel as Terry. They were guests of that amiable young American millionaire, Freddie Carpenter. So were Hermione Pegler, a much-married lady of middle-age, and her wealthy niece, Mavis. Hermione had decided that Freddie and Mavis would make an admirable match.

Unfortunately, Old Nick was one of Hermione's former husbands. And when he introduced Terry to their party Hermione smelled a rat: Old Nick, she guessed, was hoping to marry his son to Mavis, and Terry, obviously, was an adventuress out to snaffle Freddie.

Hermione had bribed the local police chief to search Terry's room. A pyjama-clad Freddie, answering a call for help from Terry, had caught him, but the policeman had escaped in the dark. The noise had brought the hotel detective—who found Freddie in Terry's suite.

Having compromised the girl like that, Freddie offered to marry her—though he had been planning to pop the question to Mavis. Terry, her heart set on Jeff, refused. And then she learned that Jeff had left for Paris.

Jeff, in fact, had an appointment with his publisher. But to Terry it seemed that what she had been told was true: that he was a fortune-hunter who would drop her as soon as he learned that she hadn't a bean. Shocked and disillusioned, Terry sat down and penned a tear-stained note to Freddie—accepting him. . . .

PART THREE

That Morning-after Feeling

IN the outer crust of Russell Clutterbuck, the publisher with whom Jeff was lunching, there was little to provoke excited cheering. He bulged opulently in all directions and, with his round face and round spectacles, looked like an owl which has been doing itself too well on the field mice. What set him on a pinnacle above his fellow men was his conversation.

It was not immediately that his gifts in this direction had impressed themselves on Jeff, for

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"Hoy!" yelled Freddie, and Terry swung round from the bar startled. She looked at him reluctantly: she had no desire to speak to him

to start with he had spoken only of the gratification he felt at being in Paris without his wife, who had providentially contracted mumps on the eve of the sailing date. But with the brandy he got down to business, and it was then that the full charm of the man's personality was brought home to Jeff.

"That book of yours," said Russell Clutterbuck. "Where did you learn to write English that way? Nobody would think you were French."

"My mother was American. I lived there for a while before the war. I've been bilingual all my life."

"That explains it. And when the war began you came back to shed your blood for France?"

"Yes, I was in the Maquis."

"Well, that's very interesting. Good stuff for the blurb on the jacket."

Jeff choked. "The blurb on the jacket? Then there's going to be a jacket? I mean—you're going to publish my book?"

"Sure," said Russell Clutterbuck. "It's just the kind of book I like. It's gay. It's amusing."

Jeff goggled at him.

"You've probably been thinking that we've taken our time letting you know," Clutterbuck said. "That's because I was seeing people. The magazines and the movies and so forth. Yessir, they're sitting up and taking notice. When I told them we expected to sell a hundred thousand——"

Jeff goggled again. "You told them you were expecting to sell a hundred thousand copies?"

"Yes," said Russell Clutterbuck. "I told you I liked the book. Books I like always sell a hundred thousand copies."

With mutual expressions of goodwill, Jeff and his publisher parted at seven o'clock on the following morning, Mr. Clutterbuck having insisted on Jeff's company at dinner and after that on an all-night tour of Montmartre. It was past ten when Jeff, after a long and bleary drive, arrived back in Roville and went to his room to get a much-needed sleep.

Shortly after he had done so, Kate came out of the hotel for a breath of sea air, her first since returning from Mrs. Pegler's party. She had stayed in her room all the previous day—the after-effects of the party had been fierce and prolonged. Terry, too, had kept to her room: she just had not wanted to see anybody. She was still there, and Kate carried the note to Freddie Carpenter that Terry had asked her to leave at the desk.

WHEN she returned an hour later, she heard Terry moving about in her room and hailed her cheerily.

"Terry—I gave your note to the man at the desk. Mr. Carpenter won't get it till after lunch. He went out early to play golf." She came to the open door of Terry's room and stared in, amazed. "What on earth are you doing?" she asked.

"Packing," said Terry shortly. "We're going home on the next plane."

"Why, that's wonderful, but isn't this rather sudden? How about Mr. Carpenter? Won't he think this sudden departure odd?"

"Not after he has read the note I've just written him."

"You've written him another note?"

"Yes. I'm going to leave it at the desk when I go to get the tickets."

A sniff escaped Kate. "The way you write notes, you might be a foreign office. What did you tell him?"

"Just that I'm not going to marry him."

Kate sniffed again. "I give you up," she said. "He asked you to marry him and you said you wouldn't. Then you wrote saying you would. And now you have written saying you won't. I'm sorry for that young man. He will be wondering if he's standing on his head or his heels."

Another young man who was in a rather similar condition was Chester Todd, Mrs. Pegler's nephew. At about the hour of one he was sitting on the terrace outside the Casino Municipale feeling dazed and fragile.

He was never quite himself after one of his evenings out, and at this moment he was quite definitely below par. Nor did the thought that his Aunt Hermione was seated at his side and shortly about to lunch with him do anything to raise his spirits.

Mrs. Pegler, too, was not at her brightest. She had just been in telephonic communication with Commissaire Boissonade, the police chief, and had learned from him of the fiasco of the night before last. The Commissaire had been rather cross on the telephone.

It was after a silence of some minutes that Chester suddenly uttered an exclamation. "Gosh!" he said, and with a quick hand succeeded in stopping his head from coming off. "That's a pretty girl!"

The girl was Terry, who had come to the ticket office at the Casino Municipale, to reserve seats on the plane home.

MRS. PEGLER, following her nephew's gaze, inspected her coldly. "If," she said aloofly, "you admire that chocolate-box type of prettiness."

"Chocolate-box nothing!" said Chester. "She's a pippin. The odd thing is, I've an idea I've seen her before somewhere. I wonder who she is."

"Her name is Trent."

"Oh, you know her?"

"We are acquainted. Frederick met her at St. Rocque."

"I met a girl called Trent at St. Rocque. She and Jane and Freddie and I dined together one night. Some relation, perhaps?"

"I believe Miss Trent has no relations except a sister in America."

"Well, it's very odd. I know I've seen that girl before. But where?"

"Does it matter?"

"No, I suppose it doesn't," said Chester, and the little spurt of conversation died away. Chester, slumped in his seat, sat gloomily listening to the steam-riveting in progress inside his head.

His emotions when a few minutes later he saw his sister Mavis approaching, followed by Freddie Carpenter, resembled those of the shipwrecked mariner who sights a sail.

"Hi, Butch!" he cried. "Have a good game?"

"Fine."

"I picked your mail up at the hotel."

"Oh, thanks."

"I had an idea you would be looking in here. You're just in time for lunch."

"Mavis and I thought of lunching at the Miramar."

"You aren't lunching at any Miramars," said Chester firmly. He intended to avoid being closeted alone with his Aunt Hermione even if it involved stunning Freddie with a chair and dragging him into the Casino restaurant. "You're lunching here with us."

"Well, if you say so," said Freddie, always amiable. "O.K. with you, darl—I mean Mavis?"

"Yes, Freddie," said Mavis.

They went into the restaurant, but it was not long after they had seated themselves at the table that Chester became conscious of a sense of disappointment and frustration. Today Freddie, usually a lively companion, was strangely silent, and this threw on the invalid host a considerably heavier burden of social effort than he could have wished.

But then, suddenly, everything brightened. Mrs. Pegler, coming to life, remarked what a pity it was that people were in such a rush these days. She instanced a friend of hers, Sir Percy Bunt of the British Foreign Office. She had tried to persuade him to stay on in Roville for the remainder of his leave but he'd insisted on going on with this motor tour of his.

It was at this point that Freddie started as if electrified. He said, "Has that Bunt guy left?"

"He went yesterday after breakfast."

"He . . ." Freddie coughed in rather a strangled way. "He didn't . . . er . . . *say* anything? About me, I mean."

"Why should he?"

"Oh, no special reason."

"I don't think you met him. I'm surprised that you have heard of him."

"Oh, everybody's heard of Sir Percy," said

Sure, Russell Clutterbuck w

going to publish Jeff's book. "Sure," he said. "It's gay. It's amusing." Jeff began to find Mr. Clutterbuck's conversation exhilarating

Freddie heartily, and became a changed man, starting immediately to chatter about golf.

All this took place over the coffee at the end of the meal and, with everything now going with such a swing, Chester felt justified in stretching a point and leaving his guests to their merrymaking. He got up, saying that he wanted to go and buy a Paris *New York Herald-Tribune*, to see what they had said about his wife Jane's violin recital.

As soon as Chester had gone, Freddie, turning almost as red as his hair, gave another strangled cough. "Er, Mrs. Pegler. There's something I would like to mention." He paused and went even redder. "I don't know if you know the fifteenth hole here?"

"I do not play golf," said Mrs. Pegler.

"Oh? Well, it's rather a tricky hole. Simple enough if you keep your drive straight, and I got off a nice one down the middle. Mavis, however, sliced rather badly and went into the undergrowth. So we started to look for her ball together and, what with one thing and another, we got into conversation about this and that and finally. . . ." He turned desperately to Mavis. "Under a pine tree, was it not?"

"Yes, Freddie," said Mavis.

"Until finally, under this pine tree I was speaking of," proceeded Freddie, "I asked her to be my wife, and—well, she said she would."

He paused apprehensively. He felt dubious about the view an aunt might take of her niece's betrothal to a man who, though reasonably competent on the football field, had never—let's face it—made the All-American.

It was with a surge of relief and joy that he observed that Mrs. Pegler's face was wreathed in smiles. "Why, Frederick!" she said.

"I hope you aren't sore."

"Sore! Of course I'm not. Quite the reverse. You're a splendid fellow, Frederick dear—and

Continued on page 44

We were working so hard that there wasn't time to realize our own success. It was Pearl's father who told us. 'Old Man,' he said . . .

'One shove and you're at the top'

STEADY BARKER! (5)

How I created some of the best-known characters who ever flogged the air waves

by Eric Barker

MY STRATEGIC PLANS to pick up my career where it ended in 1940 had long been laid, so that after my demobilization from the navy it only remained for them to swing into operation. I had already appeared in the naval version of the popular wartime show *Merry-Go-Round*. Now I learned that Michael Standing, who had just been appointed head of variety at the B.B.C., was planning to put on the show in a civilian guise. He offered me a two-year writing and performing contract: I was to present *Merry-Go-Round* weekly, under the shrewd hand of producer Leslie Bridgmont.

Our problem was how to convert a fictitious naval base into a civilian setting and still retain the goodwill of those radio fans who had been following its fortunes with considerable faithfulness. I was in a jam. My brain just declined to click into position. Time was getting short, and the billing had to be sent to the *Radio Times*. Finally, Leslie Bridgmont told me that he had taken a chance and altered "H.M.S. Waterlogged" to "Waterlogged Spa."

A spa! Here, of course, was the perfect conversion and my enthusiastic pen was away.

The world was full of Service people trying to get the hang of business, of men investing their gratuities in goldless gold mines. Our team set about turning H.M.S. Waterlogged's three Nissen huts by a muddy creek into a pleasure-cum-therapeutic centre. We opened a Marie Antoinette Conservatoire, a Regency Pavilion and (my favourite) the Empress Eugenie Salon. Petty Officer George Crow's ship's band was turned into the Spa Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Hair Crow (he actually had a handful on the top of his head in those days).

The most popular of the show's characters at that time was the First Lord of the Admiralty, a large, fruity-mouthed, lovable cockney, who had already worked his way up from ordinary dustman to the top man on the cart who had the dustbins handed up to him. The part was played by Richard Gray, a tall, distinguished-looking, ex-regular soldier.

I remember that the first time he had arrived at the studio to rehearse he had been introduced to everyone but Jon Pertwee, who was late. When Jon eventually arrived puffing apologies, I said hastily: "This is the new First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Richard Gray."

Jon said, "How d'you do, sir!" with marked respect.

A LITTLE while later, Richard had to say his opening line, which was destined to become a famous catch-phrase: "'Ullo, cock! 'Ow's yerself?"

He boomed it in his distinctive, gravelly voice, and Jon tried in vain to hide his look of utter incredulity. It was only later that we realized that Jon had taken the introduction literally.

How did we translate the First Lord into a civilian setting? There was certainly no credible place for him in the life of the spa itself. Then luckily I hit on the idea of taking him out of the Admiralty and promoting him to the House of Lords. And so he became the first Baron Waterlogged of Waterlogged Hall, and as such during his three long years of existence was probably one of the best-known characters who ever flogged the air waves.

In the show we never met Lady Waterlogged, who always made the family's fortnightly bath-night the alternate Monday when she heated up the copper. Then there was the unseen only daughter, Phoebe, who, having finished at Roedean, spent her time fending off a variety of suitors, from the duke's son, Lord Fitzherbert, who, to quote the baron, was like "a yard of flippin' pump water" to the Honourable Wetherby Wett, who played the organ in a Nonconformist chapel and, for tea, liked his crumpet buttered on both sides. The suitors were always played by Jon, which was a guarantee of big audience laughs.

The other character who survived, apart from my own part of managing director, was the love-starved secretary, played by my wife, Pearl Hackney. From this weekly scene emerged by chance one day the phrase, "Steady, Barker!" which instantly caught on, and had two points of value. It could be used on so many occasions that it almost passed into the language; also, each time it was quoted it gave me all-vital personal publicity.

PEOPLE still quote it at me regularly. I had letters from those who said it helped them to cure a lifelong habit of swearing. I also learned that it was sent as a naval signal from a C.-in-C. to a ship whose gunfire was a little wide of the mark.

The first civilian edition of *Merry-Go-Round* opened one night in 1946. I shall always remember the five minutes before it started as the most frightening of my career. I knew it was my chance. I knew that if I failed I would probably not get such another. Had I the guns to carry a weekly show on my own, or was I destined to be gently dropped, like so many others, into the categorical B.B.C. abyss of "useful support, but no show carrier"?

And then, crash went the opening music, and I gave the thumbs-up sign to George Crow and everyone else, and we were away; there was no point in being frightened any more.

Forty minutes later it was all over. Were we a success? The studio audience seemed to think so, but that is never a true gauge of radio listening. We drove home that night still wondering what would happen if it were a flop. What should I turn to? What did I know these last few years but the morse code and naval procedure?

At ten o'clock the next morning Michael Standing phoned to say in his seemingly cold and unenthusiastic way that he thought we had been successful. So that was that.

I wish here that I could paint a glamorous

Margaret Lockwood with Humphrey Lestocq (right) as Flying Officer Kyte, and Barker in one of the 252 performances of *Merry-Go-Round*

Pearl, Eric and their daughter Petronella in the £400 cottage in Kent. Until he became a success, they could not afford electricity or tap water

picture of the next two years; but, of course, the truth is that it is much easier to achieve success than to sustain it.

We could now afford to do all those things we had for years hardly dared to think might ever be possible, but such was the irony of it that I was too busy to do anything but spend every possible moment working in the study which I had built in the garden of our home in Kent.

The civilian *Merry-Go-Round* script was an unusually long one—forty minutes; and this meant that leisure, the reading of books, the company of friends, had all to be severely rationed, if not eschewed. The slightest letting-up on my part during the annual thirty-odd week run of the show would have spelt disaster.

One day I was having tea in the gardens of a hotel near my home, when the patron came walking down a long path towards me. He had been in the R.A.F. and had a moustache that seemed to take up a good proportion of the width of the path between the tall hedges.

In that instant I thought of the character of Flying Officer Kyte, who became the most sensationally successful of all the characters in the show—the demobbed flying man who saw the whole world as an R.A.F. station, who reduced all the troubles of humanity to the basic elements of R.A.F. slang, whose philosophy was a parrot-like echo of his old station adjutant, who could fling a beer tankard with such unnerving precision on the occasion of a mess binge.

Flying Officer Kyte has been quoted many times, in escape books, in novels, and even once, to my delight, in a semi-serious French work on the habits of the English. And he was so successful because we found the ideal man to play him. He came in for an audition, having been suggested by Jon, and the instant he read the part, Leslie and I knew by his verve and charm that he was the man for the job. That is how Humphrey Lestocq came to join our team, and indeed how he started his long innings with the B.B.C.

From far-off Liverpool, Pearl's stagestruck father drove me on in his subtle way. He rarely phoned us or wrote, but one day he was stung to get in touch. He was seething with suppressed ambition.

"Old man," he said in his J. B. Priestley

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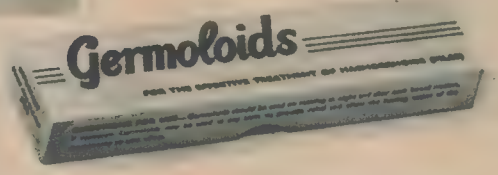

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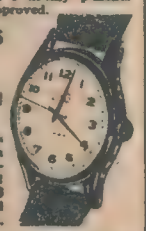

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accent, "one shove and you're at the top!"

I shoved, and one day it happened. According to the official figures, reports and omens, we had seized the crown of the most popular show on the air.

The year was 1947, and with the jackpot came all the things we had dreamed about during the war. Before we spent a penny, we consulted an accountant specializing in theatre business. Actors and actresses who suddenly enter the supertax class after lean years so often forget to set aside their income tax.

We were putting what, to us, were astronomical amounts in the bank, but we asked Harold Jones: "How much of this is really ours?" What he told us was depressing, but with a wrench we set the bulk aside in Tax Reserve Certificates.

Then we spent as we had always planned. A new car first of all, to make travelling less irksome. Then the house. Instead of the rain water from the roof, we ran a long pipe across the orchard at the back, and had water from a tap. We got a bathroom with a shower, and a lavatory that flushed.

The oil cooker went from the kitchen, also the curtain behind which we hung the saucepans. The sink and the pump gave way to a stainless steel unit. The oil lamps went, and we had electricity put in.

We got a washing machine and a refrigerator. These were the utilitarian things.

More important to us were the non-essentials. Gradually and patiently over a long period, we picked the right piece of furniture for the right corner. We bought roses for the garden. We went abroad for our holidays. We took my mother, who had been recently widowed, to Switzerland first, and the next year took Pearl's mother and father to the South of France.

Her father had to return before us, so we booked them a Wagons Lit compartment across France. The night before they left, they told Pearl and me to go for a stroll, while they sat on the balcony overlooking the Mediterranean and listened for our daughter Petronella, who was asleep.

I returned to the room for something, but the old couple did not hear me enter. The moon was as large and vulgar as a musical comedy moon, and the old man was puffing comfortably at his pipe.

"Well, we can say we've seen it, Bert," said Pearl's mother.

The old man thought for a moment. "Ay," he said, "we've seen it."

I closed the door softly behind me. They both died last year fairly close to one another. To the end the old man treasured every souvenir of that holiday, even down to the covers of the French book matches, which he would show to friends.

The step from being a successful show to the treacherous, slippery peak of the *most* successful, marks an enormous step forward so far as show business is concerned. But success requires strong heads, and there were moments when ours were nearly not strong enough.

But let us also confess that we are human and love every second of our share of fame. It was pleasant to have Emile Littler ask me to lunch at the Ivy Restaurant, and suggest that I played Buttons for him in the West End.

My own Cinderella story seemed as fantastic that day as any pantomime; and it was equally pleasant and fantastic for me to be able to decline his generous offer owing to other commitments. It was nice to be invited to dinner by Sydney and Betty Box; to be offered the lead in one of the first films of that commercial genius of the independent film-makers, Danny Angel.

The only offer we did not turn down was one to appear at Christmas at the Not Forgotten Association's annual party for disabled Servicemen at Buckingham Palace.

We opened fêtes, we made personal appearances, we even did a few weeks on music halls. For a year or so, and for the only time in our lives, we were really big box office. When I say that, however, I must except the Empire Theatre at Dewsbury.

We signed a contract there at one of the biggest figures of all, and looked forward to collecting a small fortune. Mr. Stephenson, the managing director, welcomed us expectantly. The result at the end of the week was one of the biggest flops in the history of that theatre. The audience was not hostile. There was just no audience to speak of.

About Thursday, when we would both have liked to crawl away into some darkish corner, I said to Pearl: "We must act big in a crisis like this, not hide away." After the usual disastrous last house we strolled into the bar, where Mr. Stephenson, surely the most magnanimous of men, asked us what we were having.

In the bar corner was a little Yorkshireman drinking beer. He had his hat on, and was looking at me silently. Mr. Stephenson took me over and introduced me to him. He was the chairman of the theatre's board of directors. I did not falter. I acted big. I laughed the week off as one of those inexplicable things. I could afford to. Then I made a mistake.

"What's wrong with me?" I asked.

With true Yorkshire bluntness he set his beer down firmly, and said very severely: "Well, if you really want to know, on't radio, stage, or anything else I can't stand you at any price." And then he added the remark I shall always treasure, "Nothing personal, mind, old man!" I had the decency to pay for the drinks.

The show's third year passed. Now

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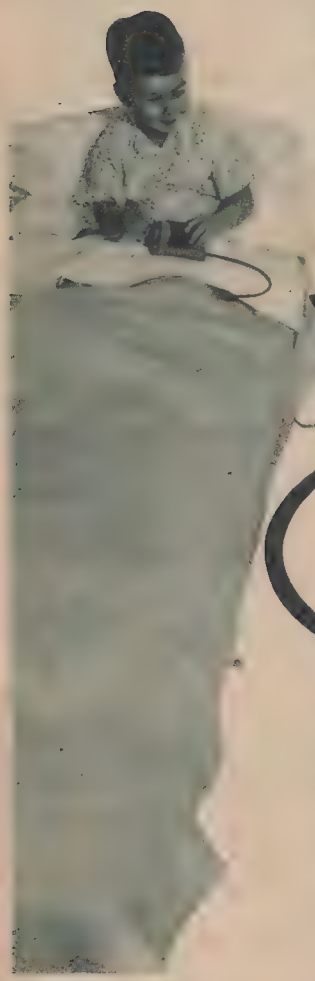

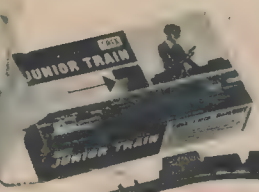

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GAYMER'S

sweet or dry

we were established as names, even though we knew that we could not stay at the top for ever.

One day I read that the Royal Family had been to a performance of the newly revived *Much-Binding-In-The-Marsh*.

I decided to write to the Duke of Edinburgh to ask if he and his wife would be interested in coming to one of the last broadcasts of what had once been an all naval show. I knew I could not keep the ideas going in this setting for another season.

To my amazement, the Duke's equerry replied to say that Their Royal Highnesses would be delighted to come, and named a date. A day or so before the visit I called, as requested, upon the Comptroller of the Household, General Browning, at Clarence House, to discuss the details.

A soldier asked me to wait in a passage outside the general's door; I was intrigued by a small bookcase containing Debrett's *Peerage*, the *Army List*, a copy of *Who's Who*, and an encyclopaedia, the first item in which, according to the paper cover, was entitled "Baby's First Year."

Prince Charles was only a few months old then, and I visualized the Comptroller being phoned at odd times on some delicate point of baby welfare, and having to refer hastily to this book. I mentioned this to the Comptroller later, and he assured me that in the course of a day he was asked many more difficult questions than ones about baby welfare, at which, as a father, he was already a dab hand.

When the day of the visit arrived, Princess Elizabeth had measles and could not come. But the Duke came. Sir Frederick Browning, a detective, and a charming lady-in-waiting.

The show was not a very good one, but as I explained to the Duke afterwards, the programme was now so old that it was a case not so much of having a script as a liturgy. We groped for an analogy, and picked on evensong in Canterbury Cathedral. Though all the faithful did not hear it these days, they liked to know it was still there.

He stayed for about an hour afterwards, and within a minute or so of being introduced to them had the whole cast completely at their ease. He was presented with a bouquet of flowers by Petronella which, she requested, he would please take home to his wife who was ill in bed.

He assured her that he would, the bouquet crossed imperceptibly from his hands to those of the lady-in-waiting, and they were away. We all went up to the doors to see them off.

I had taken delivery of a brand-new Humber Super Snipe that morning, and when we went to drive home in it we saw that the crowd had been standing all over the roof and the bonnet. We were so pleased with life that they could have danced on it for all we cared.

It was nearly the end of Waterlogged Spa. Whenever a show has a locale, in which all the action must take place, there is a limit to the situations that can be devised to keep it going. It was a thing we did not fully realize at the time.

Another reason for its impending finish was that I was so exhausted mentally that I could not tell in the end if I was writing well or badly. The show ran for too many weeks each year. Sometimes we did thirty-six weeks straight off which, with our wider knowledge of series, we now know to be beyond the powers of human endurance.

The show finished one day in June quite quietly. It had run for 252 performances and been a really great success and we were all very sentimental. During its run, the B.B.C. had fêted us at special lunches, and at the end of each series, the entertainment staff had swung into action with its sherry and miniature *vol-au-vents*.

Directors and their assistants usually attended, with heads of departments and their deputies, and many other slightly lesser pundits.

This time the show finished, and the sherry arrived but no miniature *vol-au-vents*, and the only representative of the firm to speed us on our way was the Deputy Producer in Charge of (I think) Dance Bands, who kept looking at his watch.

For a year after *Merry-Go-Round*, I continued to be so tired that I could not write well. We had no show running on the air, and I had no inclination to think out another one.

The end of the financial year came, and I found that we had earned exactly one-third of what we *had* been earning the previous year. And then I suddenly compared our net income after paying tax, with what had been left after tax in our peak year. To my amazement, the difference was only a few pounds.

To earn a huge income we had to make many sacrifices. First, I worked almost beyond human powers; we were going round the country for large salaries, staying in vulgar, expensive and usually not very good hotels; I was so tired that I had a permanent chauffeur to drive us about; we had to

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Clean currants, stone raisins, put all the dry ingredients into a basin, blanch and chop almonds, add eggs, well-beaten, grated rind of lemon, and the juice strained. Mix all thoroughly, put into greased basins, filling them only two-thirds full. Cover tightly with greased paper and steam, preferably in a proper steamer, for six hours. Re-steam for 2-4 hours on Christmas Day.

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leave our daughter alone in the house with a nursemaid, and employ a housekeeper and a gardener.

In other words there were four or five people living in our house in its lovely surroundings, while Pearl and I worked ourselves to a standstill touring the halls. And all for a few extra pounds.

Never again, we vowed. We have kept that vow. We could earn more if we cared to work harder, but we don't need any more, so what is the point of earning it? Country life, good friends, books, two cars (one for when I am away), a month's holiday every summer on the Continent. Those are our only material wants, and while we can have them, we are content.

And that is really the end of my story. It may seem an odd place to stop, in 1950, because a number of exciting things have happened in my career since then. I am now writing my favourite and happiest radio series of all again—*Just Fancy*.

This is its fifth series under the clever guidance of Charles Maxwell, and it is my favourite because I can put into it those characters and ideas that amuse me, without considering the mass of listeners too closely. That is the kind of show I am asked to do now, for the reward of years of faithful service is that there happens to be a substantial number of listeners who are amused by the same things as I am.

The same thing applies to television. Why end at this point, then? A famous novelist has given his reason why a novel ends with the lovers coming together. Once they come together, he insists, the story is over and the interest passes biologically to the next generation.

This is the story of a career, neither a very distinguished nor, on the other hand, a colourless one. It was intended to be the story of a character, and his reaction to life and a few of his fellowmen. Once a character in a career story ceases to fight, the story is over.

I only fight against imperfect work now, which seems to grow a tougher fight every year as one's standards get more meticulous. I do not fight to live in the profession. I have reached what is known as "a level," once again like the marriage of the lovers.

People may come to me in a pub and say they don't like my work, but they always call me Eric, even when they are strangers. I am established, and I am expected by the public neither to scale the heights again nor to plumb the depths. I have developed a style over the years which cannot be confused with that of anyone else, and when anybody wants anything in that sort of style, I am the man they send for.

It must be confessed that it is sometimes a bumpy level. There are ups and downs, but they are out of my hands.

I am a dull man to myself, full of vexing mannerisms and weaknesses which I cannot throw off. On the other hand, the rest of the human race I find most exciting. With the possible exception of one or two stretches in the navy, I have never been bored. But the amusement out of which I make my living has always been a source of amazement to me.

I cannot honestly conceive how anybody could have enough time on their hands to want to be amused by other people. To me it is such a waste of time. There is so much to learn, so much to read and retain in one's mind for future occasions.

I have been so lucky all my life, and surrounded even in the profession for the most part by people who have been only too willing to help if they could, that I worry lest really bad luck smite me. I am not so worried at the thought of the bad luck itself; what does worry me is whether I would be able to take it bravely.

After all, it is easy to be a tolerably pleasant bloke when everything has gone your way for so long that there is nothing whatever you want from life in addition to what you have.

THE END

"Steady Barker!" by Eric Barker will be published as a book in the spring by Secker & Warburg Ltd.

FRENCH LEAVE

Continued from page 37

you will be very, very happy, Mavis."

"Yes, Auntie," said Mavis.

"I've never been more delighted in my life," said Mrs. Pegler. She kissed Freddie. "I had been hoping and hoping that this would happen." A keen, predatory look came into her face. "I shall go right off and play at the big table," she said. "I feel this is my lucky day. You won't mind my leaving you?"

"No, Auntie," said Mavis.

"Not a bit," said Freddie. "You go right ahead and skin those dagoes to the bone."

So Mrs. Pegler left them and proceeded to the *caisse* where she cashed a cheque for 500,000 francs. She had just stuffed the bundle of notes into her bag when she saw Chester.

"Oh, Chester!" she said. "Such wonderful news! Mavis is engaged."

"No, really?" said Chester, interested. "What a coincidence! So is Freddie."

"Well, of course."

This annoyed Chester. His head was still paining him. "I don't know why you say 'Of course.' I consider it a most remarkable coincidence that he and Mavis should have got engaged simultaneously like this. Who's the man?"

Mrs. Pegler said impatiently: "Don't be silly, Chester. Frederick, of course."

Chester shook his head, a foolish thing to do, under the circumstances. "No," he said, when the agony had abated. "There, if you don't mind my saying so, you're talking through the back of your neck. The girl Freddie's engaged to is that Miss Trent we saw coming across the terrace before lunch. It's in the paper," he added, exhibiting the *Herald-Tribune*. "Look for yourself."

There are some shocks so devastating that they deprive the recipient of the power of speech and movement. For a full minute after her nephew had wandered away Mrs. Pegler stood thus deprived. Then, recovering the use of her limbs, she went off to talk things over with Freddie.

Freddie had just finished skimming through his mail when Mrs. Pegler found him in the casino bar and, as the last item of his reading matter had been the first of Terry's two notes—informing him that she would marry him—she found him in poor shape.

"Well, Frederick," said Mrs. Pegler, directing at him a look which might have come straight from a flame-thrower, "what is all this? I should be glad of an explanation."

"You mean about Terry Trent?" he said.

"I do," said Mrs. Pegler.

"She says she's going to marry me."

"So I understand."

"Yup," said Freddie. "And it's quite a surprise, because when I asked her if she'd marry me, she said she wouldn't."

Mrs. Pegler told herself that she must be calm . . . calm. All the woman in her called imperiously to beat this man into a jelly with her bag, but she restrained the impulse. To put temptation out of her way, she sat down and placed the bag on the floor.

"You admit, then, that you asked her to marry you?"

"Oh, yes, I asked her all right."

"Are you in the habit of proposing marriage right and left to every girl you meet?"

"Good heavens, no! But this was rather a special occasion. You see—"

But Freddie's recital of the events of that fateful night was rambling and obscure, and at the end of it Mrs. Pegler found herself as far as ever from grasping the minutiae.

"I cannot make head or tail of what you are saying," she said. "Not a word. Why should you have asked this girl to marry you?"

"Old Maufringneuse advised it."

Mrs. Pegler started like a harpooned whale. "So he was there!" she said, and her teeth snapped together with a little clicking sound.

"Sure," said Freddie. And then a

"I haven't known a week like it since 'Duel In The Sun'"

point which he had overlooked occurred to him. "But how did you know all this?" he asked.

"You will find the announcement of your engagement to Miss Trent in today's Paris *Herald-Tribune*."

"Gosh!"

"How it got there I cannot imagine."

Freddie uttered a cry. "I can. Old Maufringneuse must have phoned them after he left me. Golly! What am I going to do?"

"You intend to marry Mavis?"

"Good heavens, yes! She's the only girl I could ever dream of marrying."

Mrs. Pegler was still being calm. She got up. It was her intention to go to the big table and try to forget. "In that case," she said, "you are going to pay a fortune in damages to this Trent girl for breach of promise."

If she had yielded to her first impulse and hit him with her bag, she could scarcely have stunned him more adequately. Freddie had that odd parsimonious streak in his nature, seen in so many very rich men, which caused him to suffer acute alarm and despondency when his funds were threatened.

His jaw slipped down another notch. "You think she'll sue me?" he quavered. "A nice girl like that?"

Mrs. Pegler's calm cracked for an instant. "Don't talk such utter nonsense! Nice girl, indeed! Haven't you the sense to see that she's just an adventuress and that the whole thing was a put-up job between her and Maufringneuse? His first move will be to tell her to bring an action for breach of promise, and you won't have a leg to stand on. You had better start saving your money."

With that, Mrs. Pegler departed. She had been gone some two minutes when Old Nick came into the bar. Observing Freddie, he came over and took the chair at his side.

"Ah, Butch, my boy," he said affably.

Freddie eyed him askance. Until this moment he had thought this Maufringneuse a decent old buck, but he saw him now through Mrs. Pegler's eyes as a rat and a conspirer against good young men's bank balances.

Old Nick noticed nothing odd in his manner. He removed his cigar and blew a carefree smoke ring. "I have just been glancing at the *Herald-Tribune*," he said. "I congratulate you. You have won a charming girl."

Freddie, unequal to pointing out that he had won two charming girls and was confronted in consequence with a choice between bigamy and breach of promise, glowered in silence.

"And she, too," went on Old Nick, "is to be envied. She has won a fine, open-handed, big-hearted man, a man in a million. Yes, I mean it, Butch. I myself can never be sufficiently grateful for your generosity."

"What are you talking about?"

"My umbrella club which you are financing." The umbrella club, a project to hire out umbrellas to gentlemen caught in the rain without one, was very dear to Old Nick's heart, and he had high hopes that Freddie would put up some capital for it.

"Your which which I am *what*?"

For the first time, Old Nick found his companion's manner strange. "We discussed the matter a few days ago," he said, a note of anxiety creeping into his voice, "and you told me you would finance——"

"Well, I've changed my mind."

Old Nick paled. "You are not going to finance my umbrella club?"

Freddie laughed bitterly. "Nothing doing!" he said, and rose and strode out.

OLD Nick sprang up and knocked his foot against a bag, a bag which he recognized as that of his ex-wife, the present Mrs. Pegler. What it was doing on the floor of the casino bar he could not imagine.

There was something in the bag and, as Old Nick prodded it and squeezed it, his conviction deepened that the something was cash. And if he knew anything of his former wife, of such cash there would be plenty.

He sat down, opened the bag and scanned its contents. As he did so, he became aware of the Tempter at his elbow.

"I would," said the Tempter.

"You would?" said Old Nick.

"I wouldn't hesitate," said the Tempter. "You want capital for your umbrella club. Where else are you going to get it?"

"There is a good deal in what——"

"And you'll only be borrowing the money. You can pay it back once the umbrella club is a success. And if she has it with her at the big table, she's sure to lose it—so by taking it you will really be doing her a kindness."

"True. True. The only thing——"

"Can you get away with it? Of course you can," the Tempter added briskly. "Here is what I would suggest. Pocket the money and hide the bag behind the cushion of your chair."

A few moments later Old Nick was making for the door, his pockets bulging. At the door he met Freddie, coming in. "Ah, Butch," he said absently.

Freddie gave him a cold look and hurried on.

Setting out on his walk along the Promenade des Anglais, Freddie had suddenly remembered that he had left his mail on the table in the bar, and

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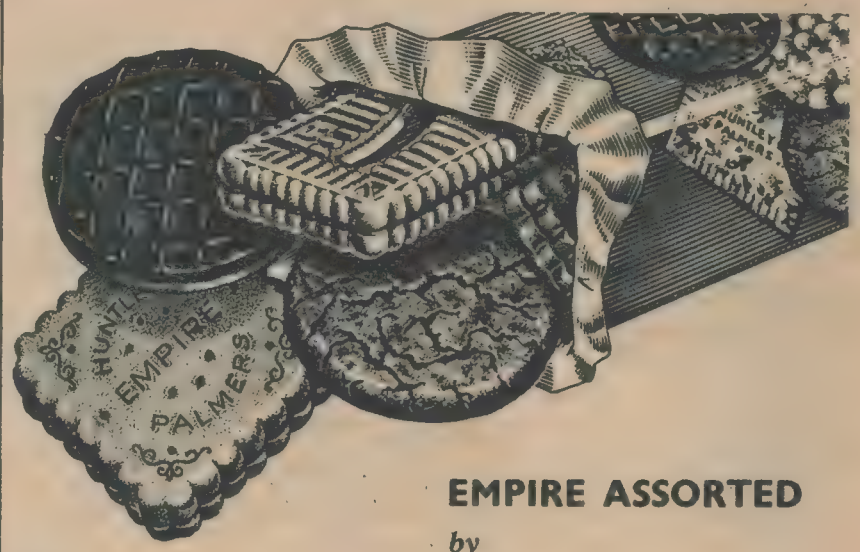

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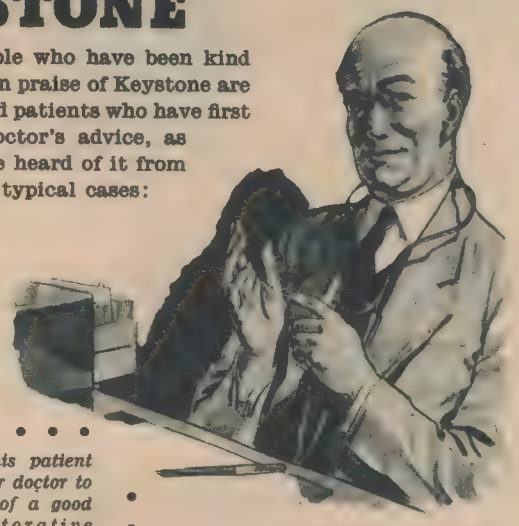

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he was hastening now to retrieve it. It was still there, and having pocketed the rest of his correspondence, he sat down to re-read Terry's note.

It had not changed since he had read it last, and he sat there in the depths running over in his mind a few of the cases of breach of promise which he recalled from his reading of New York's livelier papers. He was appalled at the astronomical sums that had been awarded in damages to the various plaintiffs.

He was going down for the third time when he was jerked to the surface by a voice at his side and perceived a small boy in the uniform of a Ruritanian field-marshal.

"Monsieur Carpongtaire?"

The child was offering him a salver on which was an envelope bearing his name. He took it dully, opened it, glanced at its contents, and instantaneously a number of brass bands of unusual purity and sweetness began playing in every corner of the room.

He beamed at the lad and placed a *mille* note on the salver. Ruritania's favourite field-marshal withdrew, and Freddie, having re-read the note, raised his eyes thankfully to heaven.

On the way to heaven they fell on a figure standing at the bar, in conversation with the man behind it. He recognized Terry, walked towards her and at the extreme limit of his lungs uttered the word, "Hoy!"

It was of sandwiches and a glass of milk that Terry was speaking to the man behind the bar. Her heart was broken, but she was a healthy girl, and healthy girls who have missed their lunch—because they have been packing and buying plane tickets—feel, no matter how broken-hearted they are, the need for a sandwich. She and the barman had got the sandwich end of the thing straight, but she was having a little difficulty in convincing him that when she spoke of drinking milk, she was serious.

Freddie's "Hoy," startled both of them. Terry spun round and looked at him reluctantly, for she had no desire to talk to Freddie or anyone.

"Hallo," said Freddie buoyantly. "I've just been reading your note."

"Which note? The second one?"

THEY went across to Freddie's table and Terry took the chair whose cushion had so recently been honoured by the pressure of Old Nick's beautifully-cut trouser-seat.

"Yup," said Freddie. "The one saying you aren't going to marry me."

Terry felt an apology would be in order. "I'm sorry," she said.

"I'm not," said Freddie, even more buoyantly than before, "because on the strength of having been given the brusheroo by you that night I went and got engaged to Mavis Todd."

"Why, Freddie, I'm delighted."

"Me, too. You're sure," said Freddie in sudden alarm, "there isn't another of these inter-office memos on the way saying you've changed your mind again and do want to marry me?"

Terry's gloom lightened a little. "No, that's the last one."

"Well, that's swell," said Freddie, relieved. "You can understand it's quite a strain for a fellow finding he's engaged to two girls at the same time." He frowned suddenly. "You know, I never could make out what you wanted to marry me *for*. You told me you were that way about Jeff."

Terry said patiently: "When you are a little older, Freddie dear, you will know that it sometimes happens that a girl is that way about a man, but the man isn't that way about her. I mean nothing in Jeff's life. You see, I haven't any money."

"Eh?"

"Not to speak of. My sisters and I got a windfall of a few thousand dollars, so we decided to spend it having a brief good time in France." And she explained how, to make the money last, she and Josephine had agreed to take it in turns playing mistress and maid, and that Jo had now gone back to America.

Freddie said blankly: "I always thought you were rolling in the stuff."

"So did Jeff. When he found I wasn't, he was off over the horizon like a jack rabbit."

"You mean he's gone?"

"We had a date for dinner last night, and I got a polite note from him, breaking it. He said he had been called away on business and couldn't say when he would be coming back."

Freddie said, even more blankly: "But he must be coming back. He borrowed my car."

"Borrowed your car?"

"Sure. He called me up that night and said he had a lunch next day in Paris with some publisher and could he have my car. I'll tell you what I'll do," said Freddie. "I'll run over to the hotel and see if it's back."

He hurried off, all zeal and anxiety to help. A small, faint hope stirred in Terry's heart, and she relaxed in her chair.

AFTER a while, however, she realized she wasn't as comfortable as she could have wished. She groped behind the chair cushion, and pulled out a bag, an ornate, expensive bag whose aspect was somehow oddly familiar.

It was Chester Todd, coming at this moment to the table with drawn face and lack-lustre eyes, who identified it.

"Oh, excuse me," said Chester diffidently, for though he was convinced that he had met this girl somewhere, they had not been introduced and he was a great stickler for the proprieties. "You don't happen by any chance to have seen a—? Oh, you've got it. That's fine, Mrs. Pegler's bag," he explained. "She thought she must have left it in here. She sent me to find it."

"And now you've found it," said Terry.

"Yes," said Chester, taking it. "Thanks." He hesitated for a moment, then reluctantly turned to go. "Sorry I had to bother you," he said.

"Not at all," said Terry.

Freddie came galloping back. His face showed that he was bearing good tidings. "Oh, hallo, Chester," he said. "Say, it's all right," he went on, turning to Terry. "The car's there."

Terry's heart leaped. "Oh, Freddie!"

There was a dazed look on Chester Todd's pale face as he made his way back to the gambling salon. He found Mrs. Pegler at the *caisse*, cashing a cheque, her third that afternoon. Her manner was morose. Her losses, taken in conjunction with her niece's future husband's prospective breach of promise suit, had left her soured.

"Say, listen," said Chester.

"Have you got my bag?" said Mrs. Pegler.

"Yes, I've got it. But listen. You know that girl, the one that's engaged to Freddie."

"Frederick is engaged to Mavis."

"No, no, you keep making that mistake," said Chester impatiently. "He's engaged to a girl named Trent. Only her name isn't Trent . . . it's Fellowes. She's the maid of the Miss Trent I met at St. Rocque."

Mrs. Pegler stared. "What on earth do you mean?"

"I told you I knew I had seen her before. It was at Miss Trent's suite. She was serving the cocktails."

Mrs. Pegler drew a deep breath. "Are you sure of this?"

"Quite sure. I found her with your bag and we got talking, and then it all came back to me. I remembered that afternoon at Miss Trent's suite. I remember saying, 'That's an extraordinarily pretty maid you've got,' and Miss Trent said, 'Fellowes? Oh, yes, quite attractive.'"

Mrs. Pegler's air of gloom vanished. "Why, this alters everything."

"Eh?"

"It's too long to explain, but Frederick has got himself involved with this girl and has put himself in a position where she can sue him for breach of promise. But no jury is going to give her damages when they find that she is a maid who has been masquerading as her mistress."

Chester said: "But how, if she's just a maid, can she afford a suite at the Splendide?"

"No doubt she has her resources," said Mrs. Pegler grimly. Then her

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former sunniness returned. "Well, this is wonderful," she said. "I feel that this is going to change my luck."

"Been losing?"

"All the time. But it will be better now. Give me my bag."

Mrs. Pegler was smiling as she held out her hand, but as she opened her bag the smile faded. "It's empty!" she exclaimed.

"Shouldn't it be?"

"Of course it shouldn't! It had five hundred thousand francs in it. Where did you find it?"

"I didn't find it. The Trent-Fellowes combination had it. She was sitting holding it in the bar."

Mrs. Pegler was struggling with feeling for a moment too deep for words. Then she said balefully: "I told you she had resources, but I did not think they came from stealing money. Chester, get me a taxi—I'm going to the police. . . ."

Crossing the casino terrace on her way back to the hotel, Terry came to a sudden halt. She had seen before her a man of maximum stoutness who looked exactly like the Mr. Clutterbuck at whose summer home back in Bensonburg, Long Island, she had so often delivered baskets of eggs and combs of honey. Then she saw that the reason he looked so like Mr. Clutterbuck was that he was Mr. Clutterbuck.

"Why, hallo!" she said, amazed.

He gave her an owl-like stare, his chins swaying in the breeze. "Wait!" he said, holding up a hand as if he were directing traffic. "Don't tell me. Begins with a J, and you run that farm in Tuttle's Lane and charge a damn sight too much for honey. Jones? Jackson?"

"Try Trent."

"Trent!" said Russell Clutterbuck, flashing his spectacles triumphantly. "I knew I'd get it. Trent's the name, and you're the one they call Terry. What on earth are you doing here?"

"Just taking a little holiday. But, Mr. Clutterbuck, I never expected to see *you* so far from Bensonburg."

"I had business in France. As a matter of fact I'm looking for a young fellow called the Comte d'Escrignon."

"What! Do you know Jeff?"

"Certainly I know him. We lunched together in Paris yesterday, and I saw him off this morning. Roville-sur-Mer he said he was headed for, but he forgot to mention where he was staying, so now I've got to hunt through every hotel in the darned place, I suppose."

"You won't have to do that. He's at the Splendide, about a hundred yards from here."

"I can manage a hundred yards," said Russell Clutterbuck, the old athlete. "Well, it's a bit of luck, his being a friend of yours. Fine young fellow, that. Clever, too."

"Yes, he's written a book."

"I know. I'm publishing it."

"Oh, Mr. Clutterbuck!" Terry stopped and stared at him. "How wonderful! You're such a splendid publisher."

"None better," agreed Mr. Clutterbuck cordially.

"May I kiss you?"

"Certainly!"

Terry did so. "You wouldn't care to come to my suite and have a drink?"

RUSSELL CLUTTERBUCK licked his lips. Her words had conjured up a pleasant picture. Then a wary look crept into the eyes behind the spectacles. He said: "Is your sister there? I mean the one who looks at you like a duchess looking at a potato bug."

"That's Kate."

"Then I think I'll skip it. Last time I saw her, we had a little tiff about the price of honey, and I wouldn't want to meet her again, if not absolutely necessary."

"Suppose I phone you if the coast is clear?"

"Do. You'll find me in that young fellow's room."

Terry was smiling happily as she went into her suite, but she ceased to smile when she saw Kate or, to be accurate, heard her.

Kate, invisible in her bedroom, was plainly engaged in packing for the journey home, and the thought occurred to Terry that, when told that there was not going to be any journey home, Kate might not be pleased.

Terry coughed an embarrassed cough, and Kate's voice came from the bedroom.

"Is that you, Terry? Did you get the tickets?"

"Er—yes. Yes, I got the tickets."

"Good! When do we start?"

"We don't start," said Terry in a small voice. "We're not going."

There was dead silence in the bedroom. Then Kate emerged. "What did you say?" she said. "We're not going? You mean that you have changed your mind *again*?"

"Yes. You see——"

Kate went back into the bedroom. When she came out, she was wearing a hat. She gave Terry one long, awful look and strode from the room in silence.

No words were needed to explain that she was about to take another of her walks on the Promenade des Anglais in the faint hope of regaining her composure.

The door slammed, and Terry went to the telephone to inform Mr. Clutterbuck that his path had been made straight. She then used the instrument to order from room service two bottles of the best champagne. If Russell Clutterbuck was going to publish Jeff's book, nothing meaner than champagne was good enough for him.

Jeff had bathed and dressed and was enjoying a belated breakfast. The sight of his visitor gave him a momentary feeling that he had fallen asleep again and was dreaming. "Mr. Clutterbuck!" he exclaimed.

"Call me Russ," said the publisher. "You're surprised to see me?"

"I am a little. Though delighted, of course. What brings you here?"

"I came because I'm in a spot, Jeff, and you've got to help me out of it. I need service and co-operation." Mr. Clutterbuck subsided into a chair. "It's Mrs. Clutterbuck," he said. "Bad news, very bad news."

Jeff started, wondering what this could portend. He was aware that his companion's life partner was suffering from mumps, but he had never heard of mumps taking a fatal turn.

"She's not . . .?" He paused, seeking words. "Mrs. Clutterbuck is—er—still with us?"

"You bet she's still with us." The telephone rang. Mr. Clutterbuck, being within reach of it, took up the receiver. "Hello? Oh, it's you. Gone out, has she? Fine. I'll be with you shortly."

"Girl I know back home wants me to come and have a drink," he said, hanging up. "Yes, Mrs. Clutterbuck is still with us, all right, and, if you ask me, biting slices out of the furniture. Say, do you know what causes half the trouble in this world? That thing of the time being different in America and Europe."

"They're five hours behind in America, you mean?"

"Exactly. When it's three in the morning in Paris, it's ten the night before on Long Island. So what happens? Mrs. Clutterbuck, over there in America, finds herself at a loose end around about ten, puts in a call to say hallo.

"Doesn't get me, of course. Tries again at eleven. No answer. Then she suddenly remembers about the difference in the time, and when I got back to the Ritz after leaving you, I found she's been calling up steadily till two in the morning."

"Seven o'clock in Paris."

"Seven o'clock in Paris," echoed Clutterbuck hollowly. "Did you tell me you were married?"

"Not yet. Hoping to be."

"Hoping?" Russell Clutterbuck gave Jeff a puzzled look. "Well, when you're a married man you'll know that if a wife calls her husband up in Paris till seven in the morning and he isn't there, that husband is going to have to do some quick explaining. If Mrs. Clutterbuck finds out that I was on the town all night, she'll leap to wrong conclusions." Mr. Clutterbuck drew a deep breath. "Now, Jeff, what's the good of being an author if you can't make up a story? What am I going to tell Mrs. C.? Come on, my boy, let's have some service."

Thus stimulated, Jeff found his brain cells functioning briskly. "What did you do after lunch yesterday?" he asked.

"But you know what I did. You were there. I went to sleep."

Jeff shook his head. "No. That is where you are mistaken. Directly after lunch I drove you to Roville. If you remember, one or two rather tricky points had come up in connection with this book of mine, and I was unable to stay on in Paris and discuss them, because my father was sick down here and I was nursing him. The only way out of the difficulty was for you to come to Roville. How's that? Plausible, I think."

"Very plausible. Genius, in fact. Have you a sick father?"

"I have a father, though not sick."

"He's a comte, too, I suppose?"

"No, a marquis—the Marquis de Maufringneuse et Valerie-Moberanne."

"Gosh! Mrs. Clutterbuck will eat that."

"So now you see why she couldn't get you on the phone. Of course, that's just the rough story outline. There may be a certain amount of polishing work to be done."

"I'll leave you to it. I'll go and contact this girl who wants me to have a drink. See you later, Jeff."

LEFT alone, Jeff should have directed the full force of his intellect to the Clutterbuck story, but he found his thoughts straying off to Terry.

Women till now had played a rather minor part in Jeff's life. They had always attracted him, but they had not been important. But at heart he was a romantic, and he had always known that somewhere, waiting, was the one girl that every romantic prays for; and in Terry, from that first meeting on the yacht, he was convinced that he had found her.

The ringing of the telephone broke in on Jeff's meditations. It was Archie Brice, a friend of his who worked on the Paris *New York Herald-Tribune*.

"Say, Jeff," said Archie, "in your wanderings around Roville have you happened to run into Freddie Carpenter, the Fizzo man?"

"I'm his guest."

"You are? Then you must know the girl he's engaged to."

"Engaged? I knew nothing of this. When did it happen?"

"The night before last. Somebody tipped us off after we'd gone to press. It's in today's paper. Well, anyone as rich as Freddie is news, and what we want is an interview with the girl——"

Jeff laughed. "Nobody could interview Mavis Todd. She never says anything except 'Yes, Auntie.'"

"Who's Mavis Todd?"

"Isn't she the girl he's engaged to?"

"No, her name's not Todd. I'm pretty sure of that. It's somebody called . . . wait a second, I'm looking for the paper. . . . It's somebody called Trent. T-r-e-n-t," said Archie Brice. "First name, Teresa."

To be concluded next week

It's The Custom . . . at ETON

The battle by the wall

BROKEN ribs, bruised shins, lost skin and grazed hands are accepted features of the Eton Wall Game, which is played along the length of a twelve foot high, 120 yard long red-brick wall bounding the playing field of Eton College's main buildings.

The most famous Wall Game match is the annual fixture on St. Andrew's Day (November 30) between the Collegers—boys who are at Eton with scholarships—and the Oppidans, who do not live in the college itself, but in masters' houses spread through the town. The match lasts from 11.55 a.m. until one o'clock, with a five minutes break.

Although there are only seventy Collegers and about 1,100 Oppidans, the Collegers have won the match almost as many times as their rivals.

Throughout the Michaelmas half there are practice matches for the great game. Old Boys' teams visit the college frequently.

The object of the Wall Game is to score points by "touching-up" the ball against areas marked on the Wall, and to score goals against a door at one end of the Wall, and against a large tree at the other. Goals are rarely scored—perhaps once in a season.

Play begins when the ball is thrown into a scrum, or "bully," at the centre of the Wall.

"There are often appeals to the referee against biting or striking," says an Eton master who is himself a player. "Some people play better when they lose their tempers."

Kit for the game ranges from helmets, sack padding, and long trousers for the players who must remain against the Wall to ordinary football shorts and shirts for the "behinds."

A Wall Game scrum. There are often appeals against biting or striking

Eton records show that a Wall Game was being played early in the nineteenth century, but its origins are obscure.

One theory is that the Wall was originally the boundary of the playing field. Some Eton footballers developed a technique that made so much use of the Wall that the boundary was moved infield. Those players who liked the Wall technique then created a separate game.

Another theory finds the origin of the Wall Game in an unofficial rough-and-tumble game called Passage Football, played on Saturday nights in the school corridors.

The constant "bullying" in the game and the fact that it is played against a wall make it difficult to detect infringements of the rules.

"It is usual to try to cheat as far as possible without being caught," says one experienced player. "The day of the Wall Game is one occasion when the precept 'Do unto others . . .' is seriously disregarded."

Five years in the Foreign Legion

NOTHING TO LOSE

by Colin John

A JOHN BULL BOOK CONDENSATION

I WAS BACK IN LONDON for the first time in six years when I ran into a couple of old friends. "Been away?" one of them asked me. "Yes," I said. "In Indo-China, with the French Foreign Legion."

"You don't say so! What a lark—we must have a drink on it." A few minutes later, over our glasses, one of them said idly: "You weren't by any chance in the Din Bin Poo place, or whatever it's called, were you?"

"I was there," I said. "I was due for repatriation and they flew me out, otherwise I would be in Dien Bien Phu now—in Fort Isabelle."

At that moment the barman switched on the wireless. "Peking Radio reported today," said

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the news reader, "that all the French forces in Dien Bien Phu had surrendered."

"You must be pretty glad not to be there, old man," broke in one of my friends. I made an impatient gesture and went on listening: ". . . troops in the isolated outpost named Isabelle tried to break out. They were annihilated. . . ."

I came back ten thousand miles and found myself in the bar of a London pub, talking to two men in city suits. "You must be pretty glad not to be there," one of them was repeating.

"Not particularly glad," I mumbled in reply. From the puzzled look on his face I could see that he would never understand.

* * *

It had started in 1949, in the Bas Fort Saint-Nicolas, Marseilles, the recruiting depot of the French Foreign Legion. Hands in pockets, I lounged in a gloomy corridor that smelled of unwashed bodies. I was not proud of my company: it was the sort of crowd, I thought, that you saw creeping furtively along the Victoria Embankment at midnight. Despite the look of gloomy despair in the eyes of most of them, they were nearly all laughing and talking merrily enough. This, I soon discovered, was just superficial. They were all trying to appear confident.

There were about a dozen of us and we represented the day's intake at Marseilles. As I waited for my turn to be interviewed, I could hear a hubbub of all the languages of Europe. Three of the men with me were talking in German, two in French. Others seemed to be using Polish and Russian. What a mixture, I thought. How on earth do they manage to command this mob?

I did not have to wait long to find out, for a huge sergeant appeared in the corridor.

"There's too much noise going on," he yelled in French. Everyone must have understood, for there was immediate silence, except for one of the Germans, who had been talking so loudly that he had not heard the n.c.o. He went on just as before. The sergeant did not bother to repeat his remark. He launched a tremendous kick at the German's backside, and then he, too, understood.

When it was my turn for interview, I went into a small, stuffy office and found myself face to face with a sergeant. He told me to empty my pockets. He then proceeded to run his hands over me, from shoulders to feet. It was the first time in my life that such a thing had happened, and I did not find it very pleasant.

I know now that he was merely looking for the weapon which might have served to injure either me or my fellow volunteers. In the past new recruits have run amok or ended their sufferings with a knife.

Having frisked me, the sergeant examined the contents of my wallet and handed it back to me. He then asked for my name, date and place of birth, nationality and profession, and compared my replies with the details given on my passport.

I asked him for my passport back. "No," he replied, "we keep that. You will get it back in five years, if you're still alive." He looked at me from under his bushy eyebrows. "Do you want to serve under your own name?" he asked.

I said I preferred to be plain John Smith.

"Good," he said, and he gave me a new date and place of birth, which made me two years younger and an Irishman. That was all. I left the office and joined the group waiting outside.

It was the first of several interviews before I was finally accepted for service with the Legion. Later in the day I was interrogated by a very fat sergeant-major at a desk in the corner of a badly-lighted office. I sat opposite to him in the full light of the window; he was in darkness. Step by step he took me over my past life—school, university, jobs, war service, all leading up to the question: "Why do you want to join the Legion?"

I wasn't very clear on that point myself.

Two weeks before, I had been in Strasbourg. I was working there, translating a guide book.

Coming back to my hotel, a little drunk, I sat down in my room and looked at myself in the full-length mirror. Then I said out loud, quite deliberately: "You're no damned good." I stared at myself, waiting for the accused to reply, watching the look of hate spread over the face in the mirror. Then I began the indictment.

"Item one. You were a failure at school and university. You wasted time and you were ploughed in your finals. All you succeeded in doing was getting heavily into debt. Even in those days you were fond of a gay life.

"Item two. You have always been a dabbler. You thought that you were a singer and a pianist. You weren't. Then you thought you were a writer. You wrote a play—it was no good. You tried to work as a journalist. You were too lazy even to learn shorthand.

"Item three. You deserted your wife and children at the end of the war. Then you ran off to that woman in France. . . .

"Item four. You're a drunkard. Every time you make a little money, you plough through the lot in a few days' riotous living.

"Summary. The trouble with you is that you've nothing to live for. That's why you always do things badly. The only thing you've ever done well in your life was to execute an artillery barrage, and so help to win the war; and post-war events are proving that to have been to very little purpose."

When I had come to this conclusion, I put on my overcoat—it was early January—put my toilet kit and all the cigarettes I had into my pockets and walked out of the hotel. I kept walking. By dawn the next day, I had covered twenty miles, heading for the snow-covered Vosges mountains. In the days that followed, I think I toyed with the idea of suicide, and probably came to the conclusion that it was too cold for a comfortable death.

Towards Marseilles, I came to an hotel where I had stayed the year before. In spite of my unkempt appearance, the patron recognized me. He gave me a bed; next morning he said: "Marseilles is only thirty-five kilometres from here. You will find the recruiting station of the Legion there. If I have diagnosed your illness aright, that's going to be the best place for you for the next five years." His wife gave me a new pair of socks—she must have noticed that I wasn't wearing any. Then they sent me on my way.

I might have explained some of this to the fat sergeant-major. I didn't, though. All I said was: "I'm fed up with civilian life. I happened to be in France, and I was broke. So I came along here."

I had to repeat my account of myself twice more that day. It was part of the system to make you tell your history over and over again, in the hope of tripping you up. I told them the truth, so there was no possibility of my making mistakes.

At one point we were marched to the block of offices where the interviews took place, and found two gendarmes waiting with a Black Maria. A

Hanoi loaded with wounded, and after March 29 even they had to stay there.

So ended the five years and a few odd months I spent with the French Foreign Legion. I went back to Hanoi, Haiphong, and had a month's sea voyage to North Africa, and still Dien Bien Phu and the Legion strong-point, where I had left so many good friends, were holding out against the repeated attacks of three or four Vietminh divisions. Sidi Bel-Abbès once again, and the formalities of demobilization, and still the attacks went on.

On the night of May 7 I slept in London for the first time in six years. The next morning at ten o'clock I left my hotel, and the first thing that caught my eye was a newspaper headline: DIEN BIEN PHU FALLS. ISABELLE FIGHTS ON.

I had been expecting it, of course; but it came as a very great shock all the same. I think I wandered about London all that day in a sort of numbed daze. I bought the papers and read the accounts avidly. When I had gleaned all the information I could from the London papers, I bought *Figaro* and *Le Monde* and read them, too. One thought kept running through my head. Isabelle was fighting on. In Isabelle were hundreds of men with whom I had eaten and slept, fought and drunk, for years. They were fighting on. That was the evening when I met my two civilian friends.

I heard the full story of the death-agony of Isabelle long afterwards, from a *sous-officier* who was badly wounded in the break-out, and was later repatriated according to the agreement with the Viets.

I visited him in the Val de Grace Military Hospital in Paris.

* * *

Across the crunch of exploding shells and the rattle of machine guns cut a voice.

"Guenther's had it. Send Sibley over to command set."

"Who the hell's going to work battalion?"

"Nobody! *Fallen lassen!* Drop it! You'll have to work it yourself or do without a battalion radio. We must keep in touch with Dien."

"Right. Off you go, Sibley!"

The Swiss jumped out of his hole and began running across the 120 yards of death which separated him from the Isabelle command post. A bullet tore a strip of burning flesh from his right shoulder as he ran. He felt the warm blood running stickily over his shoulder-blade. But this was no time for worrying about trifles. He realized that he was probably the only radio operator left alive out of the three Legion battalions in the strong-point. Sibley ran on. A salvo of mortar bombs burst all around him. He was choked by the acrid smoke from the explosions, but scarcely felt the splinter which pierced his chest and lodged itself in his left lung.

He fell, rather than leaped, into the radio operator's hole and, pushing the lifeless body of Guenther away from the set, snatched the headset from his ears. One of the headphones was covered with blood and bits of brain, which he wiped away with the sleeve of his tattered shirt before adjusting the apparatus on his head.

"Dien Bien Phu calling Isabelle," came the crackling metallic answer. "Dien Bien Phu calling Isabelle."

Sibley made a sign to the colonel who, crouching in his own hole a couple of yards away, took up the spare headset and fitted it over his ears.

"Dien calling Isabelle and Hanoi. Situation here hopeless. I must surrender. Isabelle at the discretion of its commander. *Bonne chance*, Isabelle. I am closing down and destroying radio. *Terminé!*"

The harsh crackling caused by the emission of the Dien Bien Phu radio set, which had continued uninterrupted for nearly sixty days, suddenly ceased, and its place was taken by the faint strains of dance music from Japan.

The colonel stood up and hailed his three battalion commanders in turn. "Dien has surrendered. We are three battalions of the Legion here. We fight on."

He turned to Sibley. "Send something to that effect to Hanoi," he said. The Swiss took up his microphone and began transmitting. He coughed, and a few drops of blood spattered on to the mouthpiece. He completed the message and coughed again. This time a whole torrent of blood welled up out of his mouth and flowed down the front of his shirt. He leaned his forehead against the instrument panel and lost consciousness.

At eight o'clock in the evening, ammunition returns were called for, and it became obvious from the result that the stronghold could not last out much longer. The colonel gave orders for a general break-out at nine thirty and for the strictest economy in ammunition until zero hour.

The moonless sky was now lurid with the crimson glow from the fires in the main stronghold of Dien Bien Phu. Dien had fallen. The defenders had burned their stores. They were overcome, surrounded. Dien had surrendered. But Isabelle remained. And in Isabelle were three battalions of the Foreign Legion. They would never surrender.

The legionnaires settled down to a wait of fifty minutes. This, they knew, was to be the supreme hour of their lives. The hour which, if they lived, would be for ever branded in letters of fire on their memories. The hour in which they would die as they were destined to die, as men.

Nine o'clock. From somewhere in the entrenched camp a voice began to sing the marching-song of the Legion.

At first a dozen, then twenty, then a hundred voices took up the chorus. An officer blew a blast on his whistle and shouted for silence, but the colonel, who was a legionnaire with twenty years' service, said: "No! Let 'em sing. They may never be able to sing again. Let 'em sing till they burst their bloody lungs."

There was not a legionnaire in the whole of the Isabelle strong-point capable of singing who did not hum the chorus. Even the wounded, writhing on their stretchers, forced their parched lips to murmur the last lines.

The blast of a whistle cut across the silence which followed the last refrain. The orders were rapped out.

"Legion, prepare for the assault! Fix bayonets! You know what you have to do. Charge!"

From the three or four hundred voices still capable of shouting, goes up an unearthly cry: the cry of men about to meet their death and not caring how or when they meet it. The colonel shouts a final word.

"*Vive la Légion!*" And four hundred voices reply: "*Vive la Légion!*" And the echo is submerged in the hell of machine gun fire and exploding shells which marks the end of Isabelle and of one more episode in the history of the men who have nothing to lose. THE END

"Nothing To Lose," by Colin John, is published by Cassell, price 15s.

my men and myself remained on the west bank. I started loading ammunition again.

"Drop that, Smith!" said the captain, very white about the gills. "Let's get going."

"What about the ammunition?" I asked.

"Oh, damn the ammunition!" he moaned, and there was almost a trace of tears in his voice, "Drop the beastly stuff into the river. You've already got a few rounds on the other side. That'll be enough."

Suddenly, from about a mile behind us, there was a burst of machine gun fire. I turned to Flouflou, who was now fairly shaking. "Why don't you take the boat and go across now?" I asked. "I'll follow on afterwards."

He didn't hesitate a second.

"Yes," he said. "I certainly ought to be getting over and organizing things over there." He leaped into the boat and was gone. After a few minutes my legionnaire boatman came back, and I sent Sibley over, for the captain had forgotten all about his radio operator. Then we ferried the remaining ammunition and crossed ourselves, setting fire to the boat on the east side of the river.

I am not proud of the sequel to this episode.

In camp, a few days after that crossing, I was chatting with some of the *sous-officiers* when Flouflou joined us; he produced a bottle of cognac and we had a drink. As much to fill a gap in the conversation, he remarked casually on my boots—I had cut a piece out of them for greater comfort.

"Sabotage, Smith!" he joked. "Do you know what would have happened before the war to a *sous-officier* of the French Army who did that to a pair of boots?"

My nerves were on edge, and I knew that the retort welling up inside me was going to burst out.

"What would have happened to him, *mon Capitaine*?" I asked.

"He'd have been broken," replied Flouflou, looking at me in a half-serious, half-mocking, way he had.

"Really?" I said, negligently knocking the ash off the end of my cigarette. "And tell me, Captain, what would have happened to an officer of the French Army who, in a fit of panic, ordered his mortar platoon commander to throw three-quarters of his ammunition into the river?"

I don't think I shall ever forget the look on Flouflou's face. Anger was there, certainly, but not only anger. There was also the pitiful, desperate, naked look of a man whose weak point has been exposed, raw and bleeding, before witnesses. He flushed, and swallowed hard, trying to find something to say.

He never said it. Two seconds later we were all scrambling into our slit-trenches, and bullets were buzzing all around. For the first time since our march began, we were being attacked in the open and in daylight. A section of Vietminh had approached through the forest, had killed the look-out man silently with an arrow fired from one of the native crossbows, and then, seeing the whole battalion going nonchalantly about its peaceable occupations, had decided to make a kill. At the time, it was evident that the attack would not last long, for we could tell that only two enemy machine guns were firing. Meanwhile, a number of men who had been caught in the open were lying dead and wounded about the rice-field.

Among them was one man who, groaning in agony, was lying only about twelve yards in front of the trench where the captain was sheltering. We knew better than to try to get him in. The attack would be over in a minute or two. Meanwhile, it would have been foolish for anyone to brave the bursts of machine gun fire which were still pouring from the trees at the edge of the forest.

Yes, foolish, even for a very brave man.

All at once, we saw a figure leap from a trench and begin running across the bullet-swept open space towards the wounded man.

"Come back, *mon Capitaine*, come back!" shouted a dozen voices; but Flouflou went on. He reached the wounded man, and had started dragging him back towards the trench before the Vietminh got him.

When the enemy had retired and we were able to get out and count our losses, we found that it had taken four bullets to kill him. I am pretty certain that he was hit at least once on his way out. It was a foolish but brave act, and, in a way, I felt responsible for his death.

I think it took us four days to get across the mountains. I cannot be sure, for we had by then lost all sense of time; but I think it must have been about that, because we started off with three days' rations, and I know that when we arrived at our camp on the Tongking side we had had nothing to eat that day. As we staggered down the eastern foothills, we caught occasional glimpses, through the trees, of the flat, open country of the delta.

At last the long, weary column of marching men straggled into the clearing and dispersed automatically, each company and section to its appointed defensive position. We began taking off our heavy packs and sinking lethargically to the ground. Grunting and swearing, the machine gunners set to work to place their weapons in the positions indicated by their platoon commanders. I told Jaderny to get the mortars into position.

"What's the name of this place, *Chef*?" asked a legionnaire. I looked at my map.

"Dien something or other," I replied. "I can't see properly because my map's creased just at that spot."

"Dien Bien Phu," supplied Jaderny.

The following day, four planeloads of reinforcements for our unit were due to arrive at the airstrip three miles to the north. On their return flight the aircraft were to take back to Hanoi all the men due for repatriation. That included me. My time with the Legion was up.

We had a farewell party round the camp fire, and we drank the two bottles of cognac that Jaderny had carried in his rucksack all the way from Paksane. Far away to the north-west we heard bursts of machine gun fire.

I recognized a number of old friends among the reinforcements who arrived on the airstrip the next morning. I only had time to shake hands, for the planes had orders not to remain more than ten minutes on the ground.

As the DC3 circled round and headed east towards Hanoi, I could see below me hundreds of tiny figures feverishly digging trenches all round the airstrip we had just left. Farther off, to the south, was another group of figures waving to us from the place which was later to be known as "Isabelle," the southern stronghold of the fortress of Dien Bien Phu.

It all looked very peaceful from a thousand feet up in the air, but that same night all hell was let loose there. As it turned out, we were the last *rapatriables* to come out of the place. Thereafter the few aeroplanes which succeeded in landing there and taking off again returned to

Frenchman in our ranks was handcuffed and invited to take a seat in the van. He had been caught as a result of a check the Legion authorities had made with the police earlier in the day.

The Black Maria with the gendarmes drove out of the gates of the fort to a chorus of hoots and jeers from the legionnaires, who have no great love for the *flics*.

When we had all been interviewed, a legionnaire marched us off to the barrack room where we were to sleep. It was a sort of dungeon encased in the massive stone wall of the fort. On either side of a central passage was a row of double-tiered beds. On each was a doubtful-looking straw palliasse and two blankets. I had the impression of entering a prison. When we had installed ourselves, one of the men and I strolled out to the fort's ramparts and looked out over the harbour. He was a Swiss and he called himself Sibley.

"That is not my real name," he explained. "They always make you change your name when you sign on here."

Perhaps because I was the only Englishman among them, or was older than they or simply a good listener, many of my new companions confided their life stories to me. Sibley was no exception. He told me he was running away from his wife. He had left a good job in his father-in-law's bank in Zürich because he could stand her no longer. Three riotous weeks in Paris left him feeling that his next step was inevitable. "We Swiss are traditional legionnaires," he said. "Many of my friends have served their five years in the Legion, so I khow a little about it. When it became impossible for me to return home, it was a logical step to go to the recruiting station."

It was Sibley who corrected some of my ideas about the Legion. Looking at the miserable, ragged human wrecks who were milling in the courtyard of the fort, I murmured, half to myself: "The dregs of humanity, that's what they are."

"Do you really think so?" he asked. "I do not believe that you know what the real dregs are like. Dregs would never have had the guts to sign on here. It might interest you to know that among those dregs are a professor of philosophy from a famous university, a pianist who was one of Bartok's favourite pupils, and one of Warsaw's leading barristers.

"You can speak French and German, Smith. Why don't you get to know these people? I can't help noticing that, since you walked in here, the only men you have opened your mouth to are those who can speak English."

He looked at me mischievously. "That wouldn't be—an English failing, would it?

"Try to forget about nationality," he went on. "Don't look on these men as Poles or Germans or Italians. And never discriminate between nationalities—that is regarded as very nearly a crime in the Legion. And never ask a legionnaire about his past life. If he tells you, well and good—but never ask."

The members of our little group of recruits did not need much asking, however. In those first days at Fort Saint-Nicolas I listened to many personal stories from men whose real names I never knew.

There was Scheer, an Alsatian; he told me how each time the frontier of Alsace was altered, his nationality changed. In his thirty-two years he had been German twice and French twice. He served with the French Army when war broke out. The Germans captured him and put him in the *Wehrmacht*. He marched on Moscow, and when the French eventually recaptured him, they sentenced him to two years' imprisonment. "I left prison three days ago and came straight here," he told me.

Kirsch, the German, fought the British in North Africa. Talking to him, I learned that he had been with the 21st Panzer Division which overran and nearly wiped out my own unit at Bir Belifa in 1942. I had not liked Kirsch until then; he was too arrogant, too much the stiff-necked junker. Now I found I was looking at him with the respect—often ripening into friendship—that men feel who have fought on opposing sides of the same battlefield.

Ambrosio, the Italian, was the son of an air force captain. At the age of fifteen, when politics had made a traitor of his father and ruined his family, Ambrosio was earning a fortune from Black Market operations. Then he took up large-scale smuggling between Italy and France. He joined the Legion when the French Customs were on his trail and there was a warrant for his arrest in Italy. At the fort, he set to work to organize the marketing of all saleable and barterable commodities in the camp. You could always sell a civilian scarf through Ambrosio, buy cigarettes or trade your wine ration! He was young and gay and everybody liked him.

On the fourth day of our stay in Marseilles, Ambrosio quoted a rumour that the following afternoon we were going to be put into uniform and embarked for Oran. It was evening and we were all huddled together on the ramparts, forlorn because we had no money, no cigarettes, and were bedraggled in our civilian clothes.

"Parade for you lot in half an hour!" shouted a corporal. "In front of the photographer's booth. And wash your ugly mugs before then so that the detectives will recognize you."

We all laughed at this coarse humour. We were getting used to well-intentioned insults.

"It would be easier if they gave us some soap," I said.

"Buy some!" laughed the corporal.

"*Kein geld*—no money," said someone.

"*Dann abstauben!*" shouted the corporal, and walked off.

We were already beginning to pick up some of the Legion slang. This is a mixture of French argot and German army jargon, with a few words of Russian, Polish, Arabic and Annamite thrown in. "*Abstauben*," for example, is the equivalent of "winning" in the sense of acquiring. But that meaning is not to be found in any German dictionary.

The next day, by a stroke of the pen, I became a member of the French Foreign Legion for five years—until 1954.

The same night I became very ill. My long walk from Strasbourg had left me with a cold. Now I felt as though I had flu, tonsillitis and a shattering headache. I was bundled off to the sick bay, and when the doctor came to look me over, I expected him to tell me that I wouldn't be strong enough to stand the tough life of the Legion. "Out you go!" were the words I waited to hear.

How little I knew the Legion then!

"Well, old fellow," he said, "we'll have to pack you off to hospital this afternoon. Hurry up and get well, and come back to us in good form."

Towards midday, I heard that the detachment of which I should have formed part was leaving at two o'clock for the Legion's base in North Africa. I thought dimly that I would have liked to say goodbye to Scheer and one or two others. In a while there came a whispering and scuffling in the corridor outside, and I heard the voice of the

infirmary attendant: "All right—only five minutes, and don't let the doctor see you."

The door opened and they all came trooping in—Sibley, Scheer, Ambrosio and the rest: they had come to say goodbye.

They brought with them a sackful of oranges—each man must have gone without his dessert at dinner that day—and two packets of cigarettes. And the poor fellows hadn't two halfpennies between the lot of them. They stood about awkwardly for a few minutes, wishing me luck and telling me to get well quickly. Then the orderly shooed them out. I had known none of them for longer than four days, and to some I had not even spoken one word.

* * *

Of my five ward companions, two were raw recruits like myself. They were a Pole and a Frenchman.

The Pole was called Jaderny and, like Scheer the Alsatian, he had just come out of prison before joining the Legion. He had been an eye-witness of the fall of Warsaw in 1939 and had taken a prominent part in the ill-fated Warsaw rising five years later.

He escaped from Warsaw in time to avoid arrest by the Soviet secret police: the Russian political commissars viewed all leaders of the Polish underground with the deepest suspicion. They probably thought that those who had been so successful at resisting the Germans might be equally successful against the Russians.

For two years Jaderny wandered across Europe. In a Paris bar he found the girl he had loved in Poland. She had promised to be faithful to him, but now she was with another man—a fat, elderly man.

The police arrested Jaderny for doing his best to throttle her. He was sentenced to eighteen months in prison for assault, the French being lenient to *le crime passionel*.

"When I came out of prison," he ended, "the first thing I did was to get miserably drunk. I stayed so until I had no money left, and then I took the Métro to the Legion recruiting office. I had nothing more to lose; nothing whatsoever."

Poor Jaderny, I thought. I suspected even then that he was a little off his rocker. Four years later, in Indo-China, when I saw him amusing himself by eating live lizards, I was convinced of it.

Of a very different type was the Frenchman. Indeed, he was different from nearly all the other Frenchmen I met in the Legion. I learned later, though never from his own lips, that in private life Legionnaire Blanc was a *vicomte*. He was a royalist and his opinions had got him into trouble, especially as towards the end of the war he was commanding a company of volunteers fighting with the Germans on the Russian front.

He was a man of wide culture and easy good manners and we spent many an hour together discussing music and literature.

The three of us left the hospital together. We walked back to the Fort Saint-Nicolas; I was feeling really fit.

Back at the fort, we discovered that a detachment was leaving for North Africa that very afternoon, but it appeared that a rigid bureaucracy was incapable of adding our names to the list. Blanc knew how to deal with bureaucracy: two thousand francs to a corporal and a thousand to the clerk, and the affair was settled.

"What made you so certain that you could bribe them?" I asked Blanc later that evening, as we stood at the ship's rail.

"They were both Frenchmen," replied Blanc bitterly. The siren gave a despairing wail, and the ship turned her bows towards Africa.

We disembarked at Oran; our destination was Sidi Bel-Abbès, the headquarters of the Legion. It was fifty miles away and we travelled by goods train. The journey took more than twelve hours of jolting and shaking. By midday we had covered half the distance and, as the locomotive was making an hour's halt, we were allowed to get out of the train for a meal.

Two corporals organized the distribution of food. This appeared at first sight to be a complicated business. There was, for example, a loaf for five men, a jar of potted meat for six, and a tin of sardines for four—and a jerrycan of wine for the entire detachment.

The method of distribution was quite simple—for the corporals. They paraded us in four ranks and handed a tin of sardines to each front-rank man. Then they formed five ranks and did the same thing for the bread, and six ranks for the potted meat. All we had to do was to memorize three faces and associate each with a type of food.

When we scrambled back into the wagons an hour later, some of the fellows were still searching for the front-ranker with their bread.

At Sidi Bel-Abbès, the round of interrogations and interviews began all over again. It started as soon as we arrived, the idea being to shock us into contradicting our previous statements at a time when we were ravenously hungry, tired from the journey and generally demoralized. When the questioning was finished, we were directed to the refectory where a hot meal was waiting.

Jaderny was looking ill at ease. He had a black eye and his nose was bleeding. The interrogators had given him a rough passage when he refused at first to admit the story of his attempted murder of his girl friend. When he finally confessed they told him he was a fool not to have admitted the truth at the beginning; the crime, having been expiated, made no difference to his standing in the Legion.

Our instructors at Sidi Bel-Abbès taught us how to approach an officer: "You open the door and enter the office. You march smartly up to a point six paces in front of the officer's desk, salute, and then remove your *képi*"—the white-covered cap which is the hallmark of the legionnaire—"with your left hand. You then present yourself in the following form: 'Legionnaire so-and-so. So many months of service. *A vos ordres, mon capitaine.*'"

When my turn came for interview, I opened the door and, as directed, marched smartly to a point which I estimated to be six paces in front of the desk. I did a smart left turn and saluted, but I didn't get any farther.

"Well, I'll be damned," said the captain in English.

I looked at him and blinked. He was a dapper little fellow of about thirty, with an elfin face and smiling brown eyes. I opened my mouth to say my little piece. He laughed.

"You don't have to introduce yourself to me," he said, standing up and stretching out his hand. "We had lunch together seven years ago."

It came back to me suddenly. My meeting in Cairo with a cousin who was doing French liaison work; his introducing me to a French *commandant* and a rather insignificant little second-lieutenant, both survivors from Bir Hakeim. The captain sitting at the desk in front of me must have been the second-lieutenant of 1942. He invited me to sit down and have a cigarette.

"Listen," he said, still speaking English. "I'm

upon as a very important festival, in the Legion it is celebrated very much the same as in the British Army. Every man receives a handsome present bought out of Legion welfare and company funds. These presents are distributed on Christmas Eve, and then the whole company sits down together to a meal presided over by the company commander.

A padre had been imported from Hanoi along with the fresh vegetables and the champagne. Before we sat down to our midnight feast, he said a mass for three men who had been killed the day before on other patrols. Everybody attended that mass, Catholic or not. It was very short, very simple and very touching. The altar consisted of a packing-case covered with a blanket, on which were placed a vase of flowers, a tiny wooden crucifix, two domestic candles and the missal. The priest wore a simple white surplice together with a black stole over his khaki drill trousers. At the end, a German choir sang *Stille Nacht*. Then the padre took off his stole.

"Let's go and have a drink," he said.

Tables had been arranged in the open air in the form of a square, and the whole company sat down together. In the middle of the square formed by the tables an enormous camp fire had been built, its flames rising to a height of fifteen or twenty feet. The commandant had decided to throw caution to the winds for that night.

"Que diable!" he said, as he visited us on his way round the companies. "It's Christmas, isn't it? Let's enjoy it. If we're attacked, well, we're attacked, and we'll have a jolly good fight."

The party continued until three in the morning, and a few hardy individuals went on till dawn.

At midday the next morning, just as we were sitting down to our Christmas Day dinner, news came through on the radio that the other half of the battalion had been very heavily attacked in the Plaine des Jarres. Only about seventy-five miles of road then remained to be cut in order to effect the junction between north and south. During the afternoon the engineer company disappeared in a cloud of dust in the direction of Paksane.

There was panic in high places that night. Suddenly, where only isolated handfuls of Viet-minh had been before, there now appeared to be whole battalions, or, at least, so the Intelligence reports said. There were rumours of three or four Viet divisions. On the day after Christmas, the High Command took fright and decided to evacuate the Plaine des Jarres.

Most of the troops were evacuated by air, but the other half of our battalion, which was less than eighty miles away to the north, was ordered to continue marching southwards through the forest, while we were to march northwards to meet them. A meeting-point was arranged about mid-way, where there was a fairly large ricefield, about a mile square, that could be used for the parachuting of supplies.

Among the parachuted stores were several cases of beer in just sufficient quantity to allow the distribution of one bottle to two men. The cases, jealously guarded by armed sentries for two days, were opened as soon as the other party arrived in the late afternoon of December 31, and Sibley, Jaderny and I toasted the arrival of 1954.

A convoy of lorries was waiting at the road-head ready to take us back down to Paksane. How we cursed those clumsy Laotian drivers, as they slammed us into every pothole they could find on the road and stalled their engines at the bottom of each ravine. Had we known they were the last wheeled vehicles we were to see for weeks, we might have been more appreciative.

If from now on I am a little vague as to places and dates, it is because I have forgotten them, if indeed I ever knew them clearly. In two months we marched something like four hundred miles from Paksane through forest and jungle, always heading towards the east. Night followed day in monotonous succession. We forgot the events of the previous day as soon as the next morning dawned. We forgot the names of places through which we had passed. We forgot the date of the month and the day of the week.

We lived only for the present, and our only realities were the loads we were carrying on our backs and the jungle path stretching out interminably before us. The only events of importance were the parachutings of supplies at the dropping-zones. Our whole existence came to centre in those sacks and packing-cases dropping out of the sky at the end of their red, white and green umbrellas.

For those of us who were merely carrying our loads it was bad enough; for those who were carrying stretchers containing the wounded it must have been terrible. At one time the progress of the march was impeded to such an extent by the number of stretcher cases that orders were given for all men whose legs were not broken to march. In my platoon there was one man who went on for three days with both arms smashed, and another with brush fever and a temperature which never dropped below 102 who completed the entire march and refused to let anybody carry his pack.

We had returned to the old traditional formula of the Legion: "March or die!"

Our physical troubles were not the only ones. Slowly the dismal conviction forced itself into our fatigue-dimmed minds: we were no longer chasing the Viets; they were chasing us.

On the evening of the fifteenth or sixteenth day, we came to a river crossing. I can't remember the name of the river, but it was quite a big one. There were some Viets, variously estimated from two or three men to a brigade, harassing us all the time in the rear. It looked as though we might achieve a measure of temporary security if we managed to get safely across. We were bringing up the rear that day, and Flouflou, as we called my company commander, was always much more jittery when we were at the head or tail of the column than when we were safely tucked away in the middle.

As it turned out, there were not nearly enough boats for crossing the river. By the time the company in front of ours was over and we were able to start moving, it was two in the morning.

Flouflou, looking on, all dither and impatience, noticed that there was only one man in the first boat.

"What the devil are you doing there, Smith?" he asked in a hoarse whisper, as though the Viets were only five yards away, which they may have been for all I know. "Why on earth is there only one man in that boat?"

I explained that I was ferrying my ammunition across first. Allowing fifty rounds to a boat, to be on the safe side, I had reckoned on four boat journeys to get the stuff across.

He let the first load go. It was well out into midstream before we had finished arguing about it, anyhow. When the boat returned, he told me to stop shipping ammunition and get the men across. I didn't like doing it, but I executed the order.

At last only the captain, together with one of

the base, we celebrated Christmas on Boxing Day. We had sustained a hundred and twenty casualties, so those of us who remained had half again as much to eat and drink as we had expected. And the Germans sang *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,* as only legionnaires can sing it.

Nearly all operations in the Tongking Delta fell into one of two categories. Either you went off on a wild goose chase and never even smelt a Viet, or you stuck out your neck a bit too far and had it neatly lopped off for your pains. Of this second type was Operation X.

Troops to the value of about a division and a half were engaged, including the mobile group of which my battalion formed part.

In the Legion I met many men of considerable military experience and ability who refused promotion and preferred to remain ordinary private soldiers. Such a one was the colonel's radio operator at mobile group headquarters.

The operation had gone too far and too fast. The two Legion battalions of the group had been sent on some twelve miles ahead of the remainder of the force engaged, had bumped up against a complete Vietminh division, and had been ordered to retire. On our way back we fell into a strong and very cleverly devised ambush, had a lot of casualties, but eventually managed to force our way back in some disorder to the strong-point thinly held by the reserve battalion.

At group headquarters, there was full-scale panic, and the colonel, who had completely lost control of the situation, was trotting round in half-circles, quite incapable of taking any decision or issuing any orders. And all the time the survivors of the two battalions were streaming back and just standing around waiting for somebody to tell them to do something.

Then it was that this legionnaire, the radio operator, suddenly and for a brief and glorious moment came out of his shell. He snatched the map from the astonished colonel's shaking hands, cast a quick look round him to see how the land lay, and then, picking up the microphone, started dictating clear and precise orders for deployment to the battalion commanders. He asked the artillery for defensive fire in front of the positions, giving the co-ordinates of the objectives and full details as to method of employment. He then handed the map back to the colonel and became once more the quiet, disciplined radio operator.

He had saved the situation and prevented disaster, but, of course, he never got any recognition for it. On the contrary, the incident was very naturally hushed up. I believe the colonel did try to use his influence to push him up a rank or two, but he refused, saying he was quite happy to remain an ordinary legionnaire.

Soon after this our whole battalion was moved to the Hanoi area, preparatory to being flown down to Laos. For some time all the mountainous country along the Laotian border had been under the control of the Vietminh, so that the only means of communication between Hanoi and the Kingdom of Laos, unless you made an enormous detour, was by air.

It was known that there had been a certain infiltration of Vietminh forces into Laotian territory, though the exact extent of the penetration was unknown. We were being sent there to reconnoitre. Ostensibly our mission would be to construct a road through the forest from the Plaine des Jarres in the north to Paksane, on the Mekong, the river which forms the frontier between Laos and Siam.

The plan was to send half the battalion to the north and the other half to the south; and to this end the 450 officers and men who formed our fighting strength were to be embarked on a shuttle service of DC-3 aircraft at Hanoi Airport.

We embarked at Hanoi and, after an hour and a half's flying, the DC-3 which had brought me and eleven of my men circled over the Mekong and landed us on the temporary airfield.

We established our first camp a mile or two north of Paksane, in a clearing in the dense forest. On the first night we slept under our bivouac tents. By the second night we already had houses which we had constructed during the day. Given a machette and a supply of bamboo, it was amazing how quickly a legionnaire could build himself a little cabin.

Two days later work on the road started. The two elements of the battalion were about two hundred miles apart and we were to work towards one another, so that each party had, as the crow flies, about a hundred miles of road to make. But the crow does not fly in the Laotian forest. The elephant walks, and he does not always walk very straight. The result was, since we were following the elephant track, that we had nearer 150 miles of fifteen-foot wide road to cut.

The work consisted of felling trees, clearing undergrowth, and constructing bridges and culverts over the innumerable mountain streams which crossed the track every hundred yards or so. Behind us came an engineer company—Laotians commanded by French officers and n.c.o.s—with a bulldozer team and dynamiters. The engineers, being specialists, were also supposed to construct the bridges, but we legionnaires, not being specialists, constructed them faster and better, with the result that the road was soon going ahead three times as fast as it had been planned to do, and throwing everybody's schemes out of gear.

Each platoon took its turn to send out a section to patrol the elephant track for five or six miles beyond the roadhead. For a month there was no sign of the Viets. Then they struck. With a great cunning they buried five hand grenades in the track, with a string attached to each; one man waited in hiding. He let the patrol come up to him, then fired a burst in the air from his tommy gun. The legionnaires reacted instinctively and flung themselves to the ground—right over the grenades. The Viet pulled the strings, and vanished into the jungle. Out of a patrol of eight men, we had lost one killed and three wounded.

"Yes," said the patrol sergeant ruefully, "we'd probably have got away with far less damage if we'd just kept on walking."

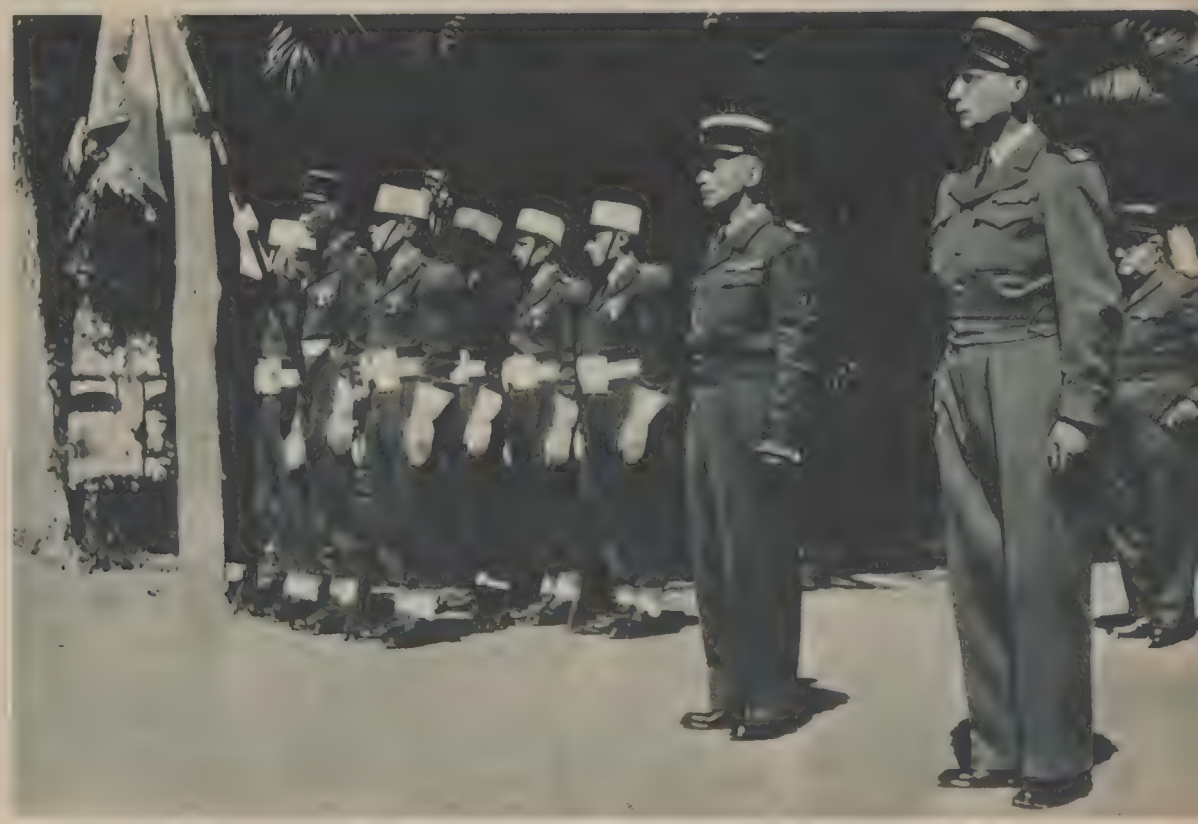
After that incident, patrols were attacked almost every day and, although the n.c.o.s on the spot did their best to minimize losses by profiting from their own and others' experience, nearly every ambush exacted its toll of killed or wounded.

Bit by bit we worked out counter-measures for the Laotian forest type of ambush. To stay on the track, once the first shot had been fired, was obviously suicide, since we merely got cut to pieces by the exploding grenades. We decided that the best thing to do, as soon as we were fired on, was to dash away from the path into the forest, firing with everything we'd got.

Using these tactics, we managed to kill an adversary on two or three occasions and decreased our own casualties considerably.

That year, at least, we managed to celebrate Christmas on Christmas Day. For two or three days, supplies, solid and liquid, had been pouring in from Hanoi by plane. Although, in the rest of the French Army, Christmas is not looked

Sergeants' course instruction camp. The six-mile march back to barracks, with kit, took one hour



"The Terror" (right foreground) was one of the finest officers Colin John met in the Foreign Legion

Jungle trek in Indo-China. Colin John's men took two months to cover four hundred miles

A Legion lieutenant near Dien Bien Phu. In the fighting there, John lost many friends

As a recruit, John was paid 9s. a month. As a sergent-chef *in Indo-China, £117 a month*

advance and reconnoitre. I told my gunners to get the four mortars in action, behind a dike which faced the objective, and accompanied the commander of the leading company, keeping in touch with my men by walkie-talkie radio.

The leading company advanced in open formation towards the village. Nothing seemed to be stirring. The men were walking stolidly over the quagmire of the half-dried ricefield, their boots squelching in the mud and their arms emitting an occasional metallic clink as a button or a piece of metal equipment rubbed against them. Save for the squelching and the tinkling, there was complete silence. The village looked most peaceful. Buffalo grazed near a smaller village four hundred yards away.

The company commander was walking along a dike, to avoid getting his feet wet, and I was following about ten yards behind him. We were only about a hundred yards from the larger village, and I remember yawning over the futility of these operations in which nothing ever happened. Then two things did happen. What sounded like a swarm of furious bees buzzed past my ears and the captain fell over backwards into the ricefield. The next second I was on my belly in the stubble of the ricefield, sheltering behind the dike, and machine-guns and rifles were chattering and barking all round.

In such a situation there is only one thing to do: go to ground and start firing back. The legionnaires did it. The first of our machine-guns opened up less than two seconds after the first enemy shot had been fired. The machine-gunner was standing bolt upright, firing from the hip. He emptied three magazines before he fell with a bullet through the heart.

It soon became evident that our situation was trickier even than it had appeared at first sight. The platoon over to my left, which had taken cover behind a dike facing the village, was still sustaining casualties. Men were being shot in the back, and the bullets were coming from the clump of trees behind them. Over the company radio I could hear that our right flank was in no better position, for they were being harassed by rifle and automatic fire from the small village. We had walked into a first-class ambush and were being fired upon from three points of the compass. By the intensity of the fire I judged that we were up against a battalion at the very least.

The right-hand platoon commander, a lieutenant, was repeatedly calling the company commander on the radio, and the company commander did not answer. I looked over to where he was lying and noticed for the first time that his radio operator was lying, face upwards, beside him. So I chipped in on the radio and told the lieutenant that both the captain and his radio operator had been hit, but that I could not yet be certain whether wounded or killed. The lieutenant, who was the senior, then took over command and told me to start firing on the main village. I sent through the necessary orders and the first shells arrived as soon as I had spoken.

Meanwhile, I crawled up to the side of the captain. Crawling is not my strong point, and a number of bullets whizzed too near to the seat of my pants to be comfortable, but at last I got there. When I saw the half-inch bullet hole in his forehead, I understood why the captain had hit the ground so quickly.

Slowly but progressively, all the men of the leading company were doing the same thing; crawling a couple of feet to the right here, improving a firing position there, digging a shallow hole with trenching-tool or bayonet or jack-knife. During the whole of the action the company lost twenty-five men: twenty-one of them were accounted for in the first minute.

The artillery now began putting up quite a good show. A battery in a fixed position five miles away began shelling the larger village, and I could turn my mortars on to the two secondary objectives.

The clump of trees was the first to be attacked, and it was taken fairly easily. My mortars had done well; they had landed their shells neatly in the centre of the clump.

The attack on the smaller village didn't go half so well. My gunners must have over-estimated the range for safety's sake, and I could see that the shells were bursting well behind the objective. A murderous fire was levelled at the company which had been ordered to attack, and the main body never arrived within two hundred yards of the objective.

Night was now falling, and hasty preparations were made for the evacuation of the wounded. For three hours I heard badly, often very painfully, wounded men being carried or dragged along by their comrades, who were floundering about in the dark, doing their very best, but often missing their step and thus involuntarily lacerating the raw wounds of those they were carrying.

I slept that night, oddly enough, from midnight till just before dawn. I slept with the handset of the inter-battalion radio set tied against my ear with a piece of string, and a quarter of an hour before first light I was awakened by hearing the commandant giving orders to the company behind us to launch a second attack on the flanking village.

The assault was very well conceived. The village was due west of the attacking company, so that the defenders were blinded by the glare of the rising sun. It was successful, though there were a few casualties due to cross-fire from the larger village, in spite of the quite heavy artillery barrage. Four Viets were taken prisoner and twenty-two killed.

The situation, with both our flanks secure, was now much healthier. For the first time in nearly twenty-four hours we were able to move about sufficiently, behind the shelter of the dikes, to open our one-day ration tins and eat. I poured the coffee powder and sugar into my half-full water-bottle, shook it vigorously, and sat sipping cold coffee, while I smoked a badly crumpled cigarette. I looked at the captain and noticed a bulge in his trousers pocket. I put my hand in to explore and pulled out an untouched quarter bottle of Courvoisier. I screwed off the stopper, said "*Prosit*" in the direction of the corpse, and swigged half of it. Then I replaced the stopper and pulled the peak of the captain's *képi* down over the black hole in his forehead.

He had been a nice fellow, that captain, very well liked by his men, chiefly because he never showed the slightest fear. He always wore a *képi* in action, while everybody else wore the Australian type of bush-hat. He did so less from a spirit of bravado than to facilitate command; but it was certain that it was going to be his undoing one day, and that day had come.

During the morning a squadron of planes came along and machine-gunned the village. A couple of them also dropped incendiary bombs, and soon a pretty good fire was raging among the huts.

We spent the remainder of the day, all three battalions, sweeping an area of about twenty square miles, but didn't find any Viets. Back at

SERGEANT WEELAND LOSES HIS STRIPES

national anthems when the old man arrived and was greeted by the colonel.

At the very moment we entered the gates of the barracks out came a fatigue party of recruits, and among them, dressed in the most indescribably shabby mixture of uniforms, with all his hair shaved off, and looking utterly miserable, was the warrant officer.

I could see by the startled look on the admiral's face that the old boy had spotted him, but he didn't say a word.

There was a very good lunch, copiously irrigated with burgundy followed by champagne. At about three o'clock in the afternoon, the colonel made a speech in which, among other things, he said: "And now, my dear Admiral, that I have told you how much we have appreciated your visit to us here at Sidi Bel-Abbès, let me put that appreciation in a more tangible form. What would you like to take away with you, when you return to your ship, as a souvenir of your visit to the Foreign Legion?"

This was the chance for which the admiral had been waiting patiently for four hours.

"My warrant officer," he replied calmly, without even troubling to take the cigar out of his mouth.

"I beg your pardon," said the colonel.

"My warrant officer," repeated the admiral, and he explained the situation.

It appeared that the warrant officer had already signed his contract, but that was torn up; he was released from the Legion and was even lent a suit of civilian clothes to enable him to return to his ship.

The colonel issued orders that the regimental number under which the sailor had been incorporated was to be left vacant.

"I'm keeping it for the next member of the Royal Navy I catch," he told the admiral.

* * *

I applied several times for a transfer to Indo-China, where many of my friends were fighting. During my third year of service, I managed to get my application granted. There were, however, innumerable delays before I finally embarked on a very slow boat. I arrived at Saigon in March, 1952.

Two or three newly promoted sergeants from the *peloton* at Sidi Bel-Abbès were in the boat with me. One of them, a Dutchman by the name of Weeland, had the misfortune to disembark at Saigon as a private soldier.

Weeland was detailed ship's orderly sergeant for the day of embarkation. Among the troops embarked was a detachment of Senegalese commanded by a little, pimply-faced French second-lieutenant. This officer told Weeland to collect a fatigue party of legionnaires and have six large packing-cases brought on board. Weeland did so, with a bad grace, for there seemed to be no earthly reason why the officer should not have used his own troops for the job.

"The odd thing," Weeland told me after the ship had sailed, "was that those packing-cases were all empty."

When we arrived at Djibouti we found out why. The lieutenant bought thousands and thousands of packets of American cigarettes and packed the cases full. At that time a packet of Chesterfield or Lucky Strike, bought for eighty francs at Djibouti, was selling for 350 at Saigon. Weeland and I calculated that there must have been a profit of something like £20,000 in those six cases.

When the time came to off-load the baggage at Saigon up trotted the pimply one again.

"Sergeant," he said to Weeland, "just send along a fatigue party of legionnaires to carry those packing-cases off the boat."

Weeland was leaning up against the rail, talking to me.

"Go and get some of your Senegalese to do your dirty work," he said. He spoke over his shoulder, without even troubling to turn round and look at the officer.

"Don't be insolent to me, Sergeant, or I'll put you on a charge," snapped the lieutenant.

"Go to hell," replied Weeland negligently, over his shoulder. The officer, who was very annoyed, did an extremely foolish thing. He took hold of Weeland's arm and tried to pull him round to face himself. The Dutchman took one smack at him and over the side he went into the stinking waters of the harbour. Sergeant Weeland fished a jack-knife out of his pocket and handed it to me.

"Cut 'em off, please," he said, pointing to his stripes.

We spent four days at Saigon, in the Legion transit camp there. As we had nothing much to do during those four days, we seized the opportunity to see something of the town, the largest and most modern that many of us had seen for years.

In Saigon money was spent freely; not our money, for we were nearly all penniless after the voyage, except for those who had won at poker. The streets were full of large American cars. The cafés and night-clubs were full of both military and civilians. Ships could scarcely bring champagne quickly enough, at £2 the bottle, to supply the demand. Huge fortunes changed hands every night in the Chinese gambling clubs. People paid cheerfully as much as thirty piastres—about ten shillings at the current rate of exchange—for a packet of English or American cigarettes. It all seemed very gay.

Two years later, on my way home, I again spent a couple of days in Saigon. By then I knew that all that richness, all that boundless river of gold—and money surely circulated faster in Saigon than anywhere else in the world—all those luxurious night-clubs, those gambling dens, and those high-powered cars were bought with the blood of my comrades; the place made me sick.

From Saigon I was posted to Hanoi, and from there I applied to join a fighting unit with Sibley and Jaderny. I was sent to their battalion in the Tongking Delta.

As soon as I arrived at the battalion's rear-base I was presented to the commander. He confided to me the command of the 81-mm. mortar platoon.

"You know something about mortars, I believe," he said, smiling. "I have heard all about your instruction at Sidi Bel-Abbès."

I saluted, left the office, and went to take over the platoon which, as it turned out, I was to command for the remaining fifteen months of my stay in Indo-China. It was a good platoon, a damned good platoon, though I say it myself. God, and perhaps God alone, knows where those men are now.

Like nearly all the Legion battalions, ours was engaged on "intervention," ready, as soon as the order was given, to move out from their base and deal with the Communist Vietminhs wherever they might be reported. Just before Christmas we were sent out to a village which was reported to be occupied by a reduced company of Vietminhs. We disembarked from our vehicles about four miles from the village and made the approach march on foot. When we were about eight hundred yards away, we halted, and the battalion commander gave orders for two companies to

ADDRESS OF A GIRL IN VIENNA

not going to ask why you are here. That doesn't concern me. It's a pity you didn't arrive a month or two earlier, though. I could have pulled a few strings and pushed you up in rank fairly quickly. But a new colonel has taken over the instruction, and he has insisted that we revert to the old methods of the Legion. I'm afraid you'll have to go through the grind of the *peloton*. A *peloton* is a course of three or four months, with examinations at the end of it. There's a *Peloton* One for the formation of corporals and a *Peloton* Two for sergeants. So I'm afraid that after some recruit training the first thing you'll have to do is to undergo three months' instruction to fit yourself for the rank of corporal. Silly, isn't it?"

He puffed for a moment at his cigarette.

"Though not quite so silly as it sounds," he continued. "In some ways it is more difficult to be a corporal in the Legion than a colonel in any other army. You'll see for yourself.

"You'll be all right, though," he chuckled. "With any luck you can be a sergeant in seven months from now, and then you'll find that life in the Legion is a much more pleasant affair."

I stood up, put on my *képi* and saluted. The captain laughed.

"Don't be so damned British," he said. "Good luck!"

* * *

"Legionnaires, in the name of the Commandant, I welcome you to Saida. Stand at ease!"

The officer paused a few seconds, to allow the shuffle of feet to subside. Then he went on.

"Before you ever thought of joining the Foreign Legion, you knew that it was reputed to be tough. In fact, it is not half so tough today as it used to be, more's the pity; but it so happens that you have been sent for your recruit training to a place where the traditional toughness of the Legion is more or less maintained."

He went on to explain that our detachment was to be split into two groups of fifteen for the purpose of instruction, each under a sergeant. I found myself in the same group as Blanc and Jaderny. We had arrived at Saida at four o'clock in the afternoon—after thirty-six hours' confinement in cattle wagons—and had been paraded for the lieutenant's speech of welcome.

The next morning our sergeant introduced himself to us.

"I am Lopez," he said, and drew himself up to his full height. "Manuel Lopez. Or, if you prefer my full name, Manuel Lopez y Garcia de la Fuerte, sergeant in the French Foreign Legion. Don't forget it."

Sergeant Lopez was tall for a Spaniard and very thin and wiry. We were all surprised to discover that he knew each one of us by name. He had under his arm the individual records of the men in his section. He had brought them along in order to fill in the paragraph: "Name and address of next of kin, or other person to whom the death or dangerous illness of the legionnaire should be communicated."

Lopez had very little writing to do. Of his fifteen men, one gave the address of a girl in Vienna. Everyone else in the group replied, "Nobody!"

Early on in our training, I had a taste of Legion discipline. We were being marched out of the barracks for weapon training when two or three of the men in our section began talking while we were still marching at attention. Sergeant Lopez immediately halted the column.

"Halt! On the hands—down! Lie flat on the ground, and place the rifle across the arms, lodge in the crook of the elbows! In that position, forward—crawl! If I see a single rifle touch the ground, the holder will go to prison for fifteen days. Pull yourselves forward with your elbows. Get a move on there, the second man in the left-hand column!"

After we had progressed for about a hundred yards in this hideously painful and fatiguing way, the sergeant halted us.

"Halt! When you march at attention, you march in silence. I am now going to command you to get up on your feet."

We had not gone more than ten paces when there was a murmur from somewhere in the ranks. Lopez again halted the column; but this time, fortunately for the rest of us, his quick ear had detected the offender.

"Fall out, Blanc!" he said. "Corporal, escort him to the palm trees."

The section arrived at the group of palms under whose shade we were to pass the afternoon at a quarter to three. At half past five, the *vicomte* arrived, dragging himself along by the elbows. He stood up, weary, but smiling haughtily, and asked the sergeant if he might smoke a cigarette. The sleeves of his battledress blouse were in rags and his shirt beneath it was soaked in blood. He seemed to enjoy that cigarette. . . .

After only ten days of recruit training, I was sent to the *Peloton* One, for the corporals' course, just as the captain at Sidi had promised. Scheer, Sibley and Kirsch had also been selected, and I joined up with them again. We found ourselves in the same section for the purpose of instruction, commanded by Lopez, who went up to the rank of *sergent-chef* shortly after the beginning of the course.

After parade, one evening, Lopez invited me to the canteen for a drink. We talked about the Legion and why legionnaires fight so well for a country to which many of them owe no allegiance. "My ten years of service," said Lopez slowly, "have taught me that legionnaires don't really fight for France at all. They fight for the Legion, which is its own ideal.

"The Legion fights well because men who have nothing to lose no more need courage to confront danger than a man who has lost all hope needs courage to commit suicide. I have seen legionnaires in Indo-China go out and face death cheerfully, almost eagerly. And when they had had it, and the doctor felt their pulse as they lay in the ditch and told them that their number was up, I heard them say 'Thank God' as they died with a smile on their lips. That is the sort of thing which makes the strength of the Legion."

Lopez broke off, and I could have sworn there were tears in his eyes. "What the hell!" he said. "We're getting too serious. Let's have another drink."

Towards the end of April, when we had been on the course for about three weeks, all training was suddenly stopped and three days were devoted to preparation for the parade and march-past which were to take place on April 30, the anniversary of Camerone.

The Battle of Camerone, in Mexico, in 1863, was unimportant except that a company of the Legion fought with unparalleled bravery and sacrifice. Its anniversary has been marked ever since by massive Legion parades.

After the ceremony at the main barracks on the morning of the thirtieth we marched the two kilometres back to the camp, where a huge meal was awaiting us, together with wine in abundance.

Sibley, who drank something like four litres

between midday and three o'clock in the afternoon, was the first to begin making a nuisance of himself. He started by singing. He then decided that he was going into town, and shambled towards the gate, dressed as he was in a pair of shorts, sandals, no shirt and no hat. The guard sergeant ordered him to return to his room.

"What?" exclaimed Sibley. "Me? A citizen of the free and neutral republic of Switzerland, to be ordered about by a little whipper-snapper of a sergeant with bow-legs! Stand aside, young fellow!"

The sergeant repeated the order, less patiently. He did have bow-legs, and it was a sore point with him. Sibley took no notice, but continued to walk out of the gate; whereupon the sergeant launched a straight left to his nose and a right uppercut to the chin. The Swiss sank down in a heap on the ground and was carried off to the cells by two members of the guard. The sergeant brushed his hands and turned round to wait for the next candidate.

The principle was that we could get as drunk as we liked and do what we liked, short of causing material damage, so long as we remained inside the camp. If we wanted to go into town, we had to be properly dressed and reasonably steady on our legs.

At about four o'clock, Kirsch, who had somehow managed to steal an Arab's donkey from outside the gates, was giving a wild display of horsemanship up and down the alleys between the huts when suddenly the animal stumbled and Kirsch disappeared through a window. Kirsch himself escaped serious injury, but the window did not; and all this, unfortunately, happened at the very moment the company sergeant-major had chosen for making a round of inspection. He ordered Kirsch to prepare himself for spending a night in prison. To Scheer, who was standing by and who had also freely partaken of the local wine, this seemed most unfair, and he attempted to explain his point of view to the sergeant-major, with the result that he spent the ensuing fourteen hours in Kirsch's company.

The resumption of training after Camerone was marked, for me, by the first thoroughly unpleasant incident since my joining the Legion.

It was known that someone in the company office was working some sort of swindle in order to augment his meagre pay.

One morning the officer commanding the *peloton* stopped me as I was walking across the camp. This lieutenant was quite definitely not a legionnaire. He had been transferred for temporary service with the Legion from the regular army because of the shortage of regular Legion officers after the high rate of casualties among them in Indo-China.

"Smith," he said, "I want a word with you."

I halted, turned towards him, saluted and stood to attention at the regulation distance of six paces.

"Stand at ease. Look here, Smith, I want your help. You probably know that we suspect X of working a racket with the payment of advances on efficiency awards?"

"I have heard about it, *mon Lieutenant*."

"The trouble is that we cannot get any evidence because the men concerned have not only disobeyed orders, but have profited from the arrangement, even though we are pretty sure that they have paid the organizer a dividend."

The lieutenant paused and waited for me to say something. There was a crafty look on his face that I didn't quite like.

"*Voyez-vous*, Smith? This is what I want you to do. Make a list of the names of men who have dealt with X and hand it to me. You should be able to do that quite easily by listening to conversation."

He paused again. I still said nothing.

"*Voyons*, Smith," he continued. "I know from your record that you are an ex-officer of the British Army. We officers ought to pull together, *n'est-ce pas*?"

Had I not been so angry, I think I should have burst into laughter.

"I am afraid," I replied, "that I am not exactly cut out for the job of spying on my comrades."

Without waiting for his reply, I saluted in that very smart way which turns a salute into an insult, turned on my heel and left him standing.

That same afternoon the lieutenant carried out a barrack-room inspection. My spare pair of boots, standing at the foot of the bed, were covered with dust. He awarded me eight days' *salle de police*.

The examinations at the end of the course were held during the second week of July and were competitive, the candidates being listed according to the marks obtained. The first forty-five on the list were promoted corporal and the remainder returned to duty as private soldiers. Among those considered unfit to hold the rank of corporal in the Legion were an ex-captain of Hungarian cavalry and an Italian flying ace. The ten at the head of the list, of whom I happened to be one, were earmarked for the sergeant school which was due to begin at the end of August at Sidi Bel-Abbès.

The successful candidates received their green stripes from the hands of the commandant at a ceremonial parade on July 14. The parade, of course, was to celebrate the fall of the Bastille and not the nomination of the corporals; but we all got drunk afterwards.

In one way it was a sad occasion for our little band, for it meant we were going to lose sight of Sibley, who had not been proposed for the sergeants' course along with Kirsch, Scheer and myself owing to his inability to keep his mouth closed when he had drunk a drop too much. As Lopez told him: everybody drinks hard in the Legion, and whether or not you meet with disaster depends upon the effect drink has on you.

"If you confine yourself," said Lopez, "to insulting your best friend's ancestors or knocking out his front teeth, nobody worries very much about it. If you arrive at a ceremonial parade on all fours and have to be given a special escort to maintain you in an upright position while you present arms to the colours, why, that's considered more or less normal. But if you start speaking your mind and criticizing your superiors in their hearing, then, my lad, you're for it every time."

Physically, the sergeants' course was not half as strenuous as the previous instruction. On the other hand, the mental effort demanded was much greater, for the examinations at the end of the course were designed to select the key men of the Legion—its corps of future *sous-officiers*.

Sous-officiers are all n.c.o.s from the rank of sergeant upwards—in other words, the members of the sergeants' mess. In the Legion there is a much wider gap between sergeants and lower ranks than there is in most other armies. *Sous-officiers* of the Legion tend to keep themselves to themselves. If they mix with anybody else it is with the officers, often drinking with them and frequently, especially under active service conditions, eating with them. All ranks from sergeant upwards eat in a very well-appointed mess, sleep

two or three only to a room and are entitled to the services of a batman. Finally, *sous-officiers* of the Legion are saluted by lower ranks, and do much of the work which, in most other armies, would be done by junior officers.

Scheer, Kirsch and I sewed on our two gold stripes and donned our red and blue *képis* a month before Christmas. Together we went to pay our respects to the president of the mess.

"*Sergent Smith, nouvellement promu, mon Adjutant-chef.*"

"*Félicitations!* Have a drink, *mon vieux*."

"*Sergent Kirsch, nouvellement promu.*"

"Fine! Have a drink!"

"*Sergent Scheer. Mes respects, mon Adjutant-chef.*"

"*Très bien!* What are you going to drink?"

The haughty warrant officer whom we had saluted smartly every day for the past four months seemed quite a different person perched on a high stool against the bar. Twenty-seven new sergeants presented themselves to him that morning, and it must have cost him quite a bit in drinks.

A *sous-officier* pays for his messing in full. There is no entitlement to rations. Messing at that time cost about £4 a month; but, as we three were still on the low rate of pay, it was provided free during our first year of service.

For his first year a legionnaire gets 9s. a month; not even promotion has much effect on this. As a sergeant I got, at first, only 12s. a month. After twelve months, a private is paid between £3 and £6 a month, depending on his length of service and his specialist qualifications. A corporal would make about £1 extra.

Then came an enormous jump between corporal and sergeant. A *sous-officier*, provided he had been in for more than a year, could earn from £20 to £35 a month—more in a theatre of war. With a glass of wine in the canteen at 3d. and a packet of smokeable cigarettes at 1s. 6d., this was good pay.

At the company parade two days after our nomination, the postings were announced. Kirsch and I were detailed to remain at the *peloton* as instructors. Scheer was posted to the transit company, which meant that he would very soon be off to Indo-China. Those of us who were retained as instructors were told to be present at the colonel's office at two o'clock in the afternoon.

We already knew something of the colonel. He was popularly known as "The Terror," and everybody was afraid of him.

In twenty-seven years, during which he had held every rank in the Legion between second-class recruit and the one he then held, he had learned everything and knew how to do everything, generally much better than the people whose job it was to do it.

I once saw him watching a recruit who was white-washing a wall, and doing it very badly. When he could no longer restrain his impatience, he snatched the brush from the trembling legionnaire's hand, and with a "Look, you damned imbecile, this is how you should do it," finished off the job himself before the recruit's astonished eyes, stuffed the paintbrush into his gaping mouth, and made off, saying, "I was doing that, and doing it well, twenty-five years ago. That's why they made me a colonel."

Punctually, at five minutes to two, five newly-promoted sergeants were waiting in the corridor outside his office door. At two o'clock precisely a sergeant-major appeared and told us to go in. When we had saluted and removed our *képis*, the colonel, who was standing up, looked us all up and down for a minute or two without saying a word.

He was a tall, thin man, very erect and stiff in his bearing.

"Stand at ease!" he ordered, and sat down.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am responsible for instruction. I need good instructors. I also need intructors who are capable of carrying out my orders. Bad training automatically results in higher casualties in Indo-China; we have already had too many."

He glinted his spectacles at each of us in turn. "You will receive copies of my training directives: they are to be followed explicitly. Understand that I will not have my instruction sabotaged by any deep-rooted, stubborn, traditional 'I've always done it that way.' Now get out!"

"Not very pleasant, the old man," decided Kirsch, as we made our way back to the company.

I didn't think so, either. I don't think so now. But I now know that had there been only fifty colonels of his ability and force of character in the French Army there is a fair chance that the Vietminh would not now be occupying Hanoi.

When the *peloton* began, I was made responsible for instruction on the 81-mm. mortar and on topography. The mortar drill executed in the Legion had always seemed to me to be sloppy, and nothing like up to the standard of the other instruction. I soon discovered why. There was no standard drill. Without consulting anybody, I adopted Royal Artillery twenty-five-pounder gun drill, word for word. I had gun crews kneeling to attention, and everything, except the carrying of ammunition, done at the double.

Very soon my mortar-firing practice on the ranges was worthy of a practice camp on Salisbury Plain. Since, for nearly two years, I was responsible for the entire training in mortar handling of all Legion sergeants promoted in North Africa, and since the tradition I had started was carried on after my departure by my successors, my system very soon became pretty well universal throughout the Legion. I will never forget the look of utter astonishment on the face of a British gunner captain who was doing a liaison tour in the Tongking Delta and saw a Legion mortar crew firing off a barrage. I'm quite sure he thought himself back at Larkhill.

There were a lot of official visits to Sidi Bel-Abbès during that summer, more especially by sailors. The French Navy, the Royal Navy, and the United States Navy all descended upon us from time to time. So far as the two latter were concerned, I was rather vaguely designated as the chief official interpreter.

On one occasion an incident occurred which might have had most embarrassing consequences. Ships of the British Mediterranean Fleet had put in to Mers-el-Kebir and were due to remain there for three or four days. On the first day a visiting party came down to see us, and among the warrant officers was a member of the admiral's personal staff. He had got thoroughly pickled. He went into the town, got even more pickled, ran out of money, sold part of his uniform to pay for more drink, and finally walked into the recruiting office in his shirt tails and volunteered to join the Legion.

A couple of days later another party came down from the same ship, but this time the admiral, whose flagship it was, came down with them. I was acting as interpreter. There was, of course, the usual guard of honour to present arms, the Union Jack on the visitors' flagpole at the gate, and the band to play the French and British

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THE MERRY WIDOW OF BRALLOUGHBY

Continued from page 22

thirty yards east of the old house. They widened the road, see? So Breadworth never lived where you put this, and it's dishonest to say he did."

"Now look here," said Harrington, beginning to get angry. "I came down here at your express request——"

"Can't help that," said Spotswood. "I never twigged it until this morning, when the doctor come in and accused me of selling beer under false pretences. And I won't have things like that said.

"Put it in the back of the car," he added to his men. He turned to Harrington again. "I can get along without dolling my place up with fancy notice-boards. It's honesty and principles that pays in business, and nothing else. I can do pretty well without any help from the county council. Just you go back and tell 'em so."

Mr. Lionel Strife Harrington sat down wearily in his car, his legs dangling over the kerb. "I believe everyone in this village is raving mad," he said.

Spotswood stalked off. The others idled round the boot and bonnet of Harrington's car, eyeing him askew. Then Mrs. Redge suddenly appeared like a meteor.

"Oh, Mr. Harrington," she said. "I'm so sorry we didn't finish our little talk. I do hope you'll come in again whenever you are passing——"

"I shan't come here again," he said. "Not likely!"

"Oh, but you must," she said. "You really must. You might find it again if you did. I'd help you to look for it. I promise I would."

"Look for what?" Harrington said distractedly. "I haven't lost anything."

"There's always one's sense of humour," Mrs. Redge said, favouring him with a dazzling smile. "Bye-bye!"

Mr. Harrington retreated into his car and shut the door. He started the engine and then let out the clutch so sharply that he stalled. He started the engine again and drove off wildly, deliberately making Two-Spike Marlow jump for his life.

FOR the first mile or so he drove like a madman, vinegar-bowelled with rage and shame, feverishly composing in his head all sorts of Reports to the Minister. But then gentler thoughts obtruded, and he slackened speed. He found himself thinking about Mrs. Winifred Redge, and wondering exactly how it was that she managed to carry about with her such an intense personal atmosphere of warmth and cordiality. Was it only a trick, a carefully directed bombardment of well-drilled charm, or something more?

By the time Harrington got back and parked his car facing the twenty-four windows of the County Hall's neo-Georgian façade, he was convinced that it was something more.

Mrs. Redge, he told himself, was a delightful creature. And he had even got to the point of feeling sorry for her. It was unfair that her plaque must come down when old Tim Busby's and Two-Spike Marlow's still stood, protected by their ridiculous but unassailable authenticity.

Albert Spotswood had removed his spurious plaque, and Mrs. Redge must do the same. At whatever cost to himself, Lionel Strife Harrington would have to get the thing removed. For Mrs. Redge to claim that one of England's—the world's—most lofty poets had lived at her tea rooms was an outrageousness that simply was not to be borne.

He worried about it as he went up the steps into the County Hall. The ardent desire of his life now was for an improvement and not a worsening of his relations with Mrs. Redge. He was so worried that he unburdened himself about it later to his friend George Johnstone, in the surveyor's department.

"There it is—'J. Milton'—as large as life," Harrington said. "And I'm

afraid I just can't allow it, George."

George looked up comfortably from his desk. "Perhaps the plaque tells the truth after all," he said, "as much as the others, anyway. Milton is a pretty common name over Bralloughby way. Big breeders, the Miltons. When I was a boy there was a family of fourteen, I remember."

Mr. Harrington stood stock still for a moment, staring at George in wild surmise. Then he dashed from the room, hope flaring high in his breast. He spent an intensive hour in various records departments, and at the end of that time he found what he wanted.

He found that a long line of "J. Miltons" had lived in the house which had since become Mrs. Redge's tea rooms. Their names ranged from Jacob to Joshua—they had been a grimly God-fearing family.

There was never a John, but that didn't worry Mr. Harrington. Mrs. Redge's plaque was true in letter if not in spirit, and that was all that mattered.

ELATED, Mr. Harrington dashed out of the County Hall to bear the good news to Mrs. Redge, savouring the delight of being able to tell her that her plaque could stay up and forgetting that he had never succeeded in telling her that it must come down.

He turned his car on the County Hall forecourt, backing so that its rear faced the twenty-four windows in the neo-Georgian façade.

He was about to drive away when there came a shout from one of those windows. Another shout followed, and another. He looked round, and saw the windows crowded with faces.

He saw someone point at the back of his car, and he got out to see what was wrong. He found a huge notice attached to the boot. It read:

TWO-GUN BUGSY OPPENHEIMER
WAS SHOT DEAD IN THIS CAR
APRIL 1, 1935

The notice was painted wallboard, still wet, secured with string and cellulose tape. He recalled the cluster of people around the car when he had left Bralloughby. . . .

As he stood there, he heard young Robinson, the finance department's office boy, hoot with laughter. He heard Miss Yates, his own secretary, in the throes of one of her inimitable, near-hysterical giggles. And then individual voices were drowned in the general tide of merriment.

It was a critical moment for a man with no sense of humour. Mr. Lionel Strife Harrington felt a sweat of rage breaking out upon him. . . .

It was, perhaps, some deep-rooted instinct of self-preservation that saved him. He realized, very suddenly, that there was only one way of escape. To outface a practical joke, the victim must laugh the loudest. If he shows no wounds, he receives none.

At first it hurt him a great deal to laugh, but then he thought of Mrs. Redge. Would she have laughed? He felt, and without the slightest resentment, that he was sure she would.

After that it was easier to laugh; so much easier that after ten minutes tears were running down his cheeks.

Still laughing, he got back into his car—leaving the notice in place—and drove off to see Mrs. Redge. He had something more important to tell her now than the news about her plaque. He wanted to tell her that he'd found it—his sense of humour—at last. And, cunningly, he wanted to ask her to help him keep it, now he had found it.

After that Mr. Lionel Strife Harrington was a changed man. He went around spreading a glow of his own.

About four months later he realized his life savings, retired from local government, and went into partnership with Winifred Redge. Together they built the Bralloughby Travers Motel, and turned Two-Spike's wood-carvings into big money as genuine folk-art.

After that, to nobody's surprise, they married each other. The wedding cake was decorated with a model of the bridegroom's car. The model had the Two-Gun Bugsy notice on the boot, neatly done to a scale of one-fifth of an inch to the foot. THE END

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Read KATHLEEN RICHARDS' hints and tips on next page

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Batchelors Soup Mixes

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Advertisement

by KATHLEEN RICHARDS

About soup! Every country has its own special know-how. The Dutch make a thick pea soup that's a meal in itself. In France they have a family onion soup that keeps generations of Frenchmen happy and healthy. And from the States comes that chicken noodle that's been a top favourite there for the past fifteen years. And what's more you can carry all of them in your handbag if you want to—which is why I call this 'Handbag Cookery'. I think you'll find this good news—but don't thank me—thank Batchelors for putting these overseas specialities in packs, for you and me to cook ourselves.

LEKKER!

That's what they say in Holland when something tastes good. And Batchelors Thick Pea Soup certainly does, or I'm a Dutchwoman! This heart-warming soup full of nourishment makes the ideal prelude to good fare.

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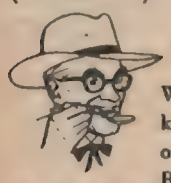

OKAY!

Well, the Americans should know. America's the home of Chicken Noodle Soup and Batchelors is a home from home. 'Taste that chicken!' the advertisements say—and that is just what you do. Watch the children's faces as they see the oodles of noodles. Watch anyone's face as they taste that chicken!

Batchelors Soup Mixes

THICK PEA • MUSHROOM
CHICKEN NOODLE
VEGETABLE • ONION

BMX/4/112/6

HIDE AND SEEK WITH THE ATOM BOMB

Continued from page 19

control went on for several years without much progress being made towards agreement. Meanwhile, of course, atomic research also proceeded.

And, of course, the whole picture changed.

The most important change is that now the United States is not the only country manufacturing atomic bombs. In 1948 the Russians exploded their first bomb. The British followed in 1952. And the simple atomic bomb, hideous enough in itself, was developed into the terrifyingly powerful hydrogen bomb.

It seems likely that the present stock of atomic bombs held by the United States, the Soviet Union and Britain could be converted into about the same number of hydrogen bombs without too much difficulty.

By now, any one of the three nations possessing bombs could have hidden a considerable number of them. It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to find them.

A hidden hydrogen bomb would not emit any radiations that would not be absorbed by the thinnest container, so it would not be possible to detect its presence by an aerial survey.

Even if an inspector were to get within a few feet of a bomb, he might still fail to find it. Practically speaking, the only way to find out whether a hydrogen bomb is in a box is to open the box and look inside.

The actual size of hydrogen bombs has not been disclosed, but, since they can be carried by air, they cannot be more than a few yards long at the most. With the whole of a country to hide them in, they need never be found.

So, even if international control were established, no nation could ever be sure that a rival did not possess hidden bombs which could be used with devastating effect when the other nations were disarmed.

This was not so in 1946, because then the American stock of bombs, the only one in existence, was very small. An expert on the separating process could estimate the total amount of fissile uranium produced with an error of only a few per cent. In 1946, this would have been enough to enable an international control to be sure that any possible hidden stock of bombs was so small as not to constitute a danger to world security.

But today, a few per cent of the total production represents an exceedingly dangerous amount of fissile uranium—quite enough, probably, to make several dozen hydrogen bombs. A dictatorship might well consider that sufficient for a serious bid for world conquest.

Several courses of action remain.

One view is that we should now abandon the false chimera of international control, and concentrate all our efforts on the manufacture of hydrogen bombs, long-range jet bombers and intercontinental rockets in the hope that mutual fear of obliteration will prevent the nations plunging into world war. If that view were followed, the people of the world would live in perpetual fear that some maniac would start things off.

Another possibility that has been discussed is that of destroying a potential enemy by a single knock-out blow. But, quite apart from the morality of such an action, there is little doubt that it would fail to prevent an equally devastating retaliation.

A sudden surprise attack would almost certainly be able to destroy the major cities of an enemy and spread unimaginable confusion and ruin. But to prevent retaliation it would also be necessary to destroy his aerodromes so thoroughly that no retaliatory bomber could take off.

This would be very difficult. The bombers could be hidden in deep caves, and it is impossible to do much damage to a runway except by a direct hit. The runway could be heavily contaminated by radio-activity, but this would not stop a bomber taking off, and even if the crew received a lethal dose of radio-activity they would live long enough to complete their mission.

In fact, the only feasible road to international control of atomic weapons is for the nations to accept something like the Baruch Plan, modified and extended to meet new conditions.

It would have to include some method of ensuring that, even with a hidden stock of atomic bombs, no nation could use them to launch a surprise attack in an attempt to snatch an easy victory. Even if the aggressor succeeded in dropping one or two bombs, the rest of the world would have to be able to overwhelm him before he could follow up the attack. The hitherto separate problems of international atomic control and of general disarmament must, therefore, be considered together. And it looks as though some sort of international armed force, under the United Nations, becomes a necessity.

Disarmament must apply to all weapons, both atomic and conventional. This presents no serious technical difficulties—given international political agreement.

But there are also normally peaceful machines and activities which could speedily be converted for war. They are, or are soon to be, so much a part of our civilization that their abolition cannot be envisaged. The civil airliner can, at a pinch, become a bomber, the merchant ship, an armed raider. Most important of all in this category, is the atomic energy industry which will increasingly provide the power for the world's factories, and which can evidently be switched to war purposes.

This in particular must be controlled. But the international ownership of all atomic factories, proposed in the Baruch Plan, is not essential. It would probably be better to leave atomic energy industries under national ownership and direction, while ensuring by continuous inspection that no clandestine activities take place.

The most likely way would be to place a number of scientists from other nations on the staff of each factory or power plant, working on equal terms with the permanent staff, but without voting power on policy decisions. Each nation would thus be able to develop its atomic energy industry as it wished, the foreign scientists would be able to use their abilities to the full, and their simple presence would ensure that no weapon manufacture was going on.

Whether some modified Baruch Plan of this sort can be adopted is not a question for a scientist, but for a statesman. It would probably have to be adopted in gradual stages, so that the participating nations slowly become accustomed to the limitation of national sovereignty that it requires.

But there are encouraging signs that the nations will increasingly work together—in, for instance, the task of bringing the fruits of modern science to the aid of underdeveloped countries.

Indeed, it is in the matter of mutual trust that real progress has been made since the Baruch Plan was rejected in 1946. The men of the Kremlin are noticeably more cordial. The hysteria of loyalty probes and visa restrictions seems to be on the wane in the United States. President Eisenhower's offer at the Geneva Conference, in July this year, to exchange blueprints of military installations and allow reciprocal reconnaissance was a magnificent gesture towards international control. So was the appointment of Mr. Stassen as his special assistant on disarmament. And all this was followed by the exchange of information at Geneva between atomic scientists from Russia and the West.

Nobody doubts that there is a long way to go. But, at least, everybody is now aware that the probable alternative to agreement is a period of mounting tension, and then a war of unprecedented violence ending civilization as we know it, and possibly ending all life on earth. THE END

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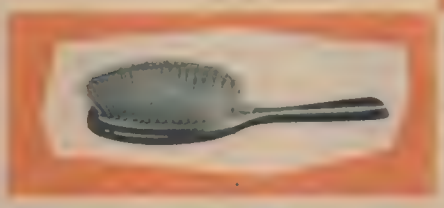

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BOURJOIS

THE SECRETS OF DOMINICI

Continued from page 32

doubt that the murderer or murderers were to be found in the neighbourhood, and investigations throughout were confined to La Grand-Terre and the farms in the vicinity: a radius of three or four miles involving not more than forty or fifty people.

The police thus started with great advantages. The Drummonds were killed shortly after one o'clock in the morning; the first gendarmes were on the scene four and a half hours later. All the evidence (including the weapon of the crime) was close at hand, and so were all possible suspects.

"The killer," said Commissioner Sébeille, who took charge, "is watching us." Sébeille was right, but fifteen months were to pass before a murder charge was preferred, and another twelve before the accused was given a sentence which satisfied nobody, unless it were the President of the Court, the public prosecutor and the local police.

The village of Lurs, two miles from and three hundred feet above the Dominici farm, is in Haute Provence, sixty miles north of the picturesque Low Provence that the tourist knows. Here, on a plateau which rises more than two thousand feet, is a region of stern landscapes: a desert.

There is nothing kindly in Nature or man about these stony uplands. In summer, the heat burns like a brazier; winter brings an icy, unrelenting wind. There is no communal life. In the villages, which cling to bleak spurs or are plunged deep in sunless valleys, the doors are shut and the streets are empty; the people who live in this iron silence trust nobody but themselves. Shepherds and lavender growers for the most part, hard workers on a poor but rewarding soil, they pass their lives in solitude.

They are not primitive, for that implies innocence. They are, on the contrary, immensely "knowing," with that frightening wisdom which is learned in the only school they know: the long contemplation of Nature.

Suspicious and truculent, they are passionate without pity and arrogant without the generosity which goes with pride; to the ordinary reactions of humanity they can be as indifferent as stone.

At the trial, the presiding judge asked Gaston Dominici's wife, a woman of seventy, whether she was not moved by the knowledge that a small girl was lying wounded and dying a short distance from her house. Didn't she think of going out to do what she could for the child? The old lady was genuinely surprised by the suggestion. "My faith, no!" she answered. "I never thought of that."

On the morning of the crime, and on many occasions later, Gaston Dominici affably offered himself as a paid guide to the crowd of tourists and onlookers which collected at the scene of the murder. "The lady lay there, the father here. The little girl ran down that path. . . ."

When Gustave was asked by the police how he thought Elizabeth had been murdered, he replied that his first idea was that the child's own parents had killed her. The answer was shocking—and incredible. No one believed that Gustave really thought Sir Jack and Lady Drummond guilty of their daughter's death. What is important is that the thought should have occurred to him, that he could consider people capable of such an act.

When the first doctor to see the bodies asked at La Grand-Terre for water to clean his hands, he was refused roughly. The smell of blood, Gaston told him, would prevent the farm animals from drinking. These are some of the characteristics of the men and women with whom the police had to deal.

It is necessary to remember something else: the district surrounding La Grand-Terre has for generations been an area of violent crime. Some of these multiple murders, such as the "Massacre at Valensole," have passed into legend. At Valensole, in 1929, a family of five were killed under circumstances of peculiar savagery. The murderers, Ughetto and Mucha, were aged eighteen and sixteen respectively.

Five years later an Italian called Sassia, a hermit who roamed the plateau and lived in a cave like an animal, terrorized the region for eight months before he was taken. He shot four shepherds dead for nothing but the cheap watches they carried.

In 1936, a young man called Yori, again of Italian origin, exterminated seven people, including three children, in the course of twenty hours. Yori, who committed suicide as the gendarmes closed in, might have been

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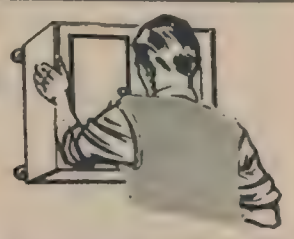

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mad. But Ughetto and Mucha, and Sassia and others who have made the region notorious, were not mad. They were simply men who, thwarted in some desire, used what was for them a natural means of getting what they wanted—the gun.

Guns of every description are common in the district. The plateau abounds with wild life—wild pig, hares, foxes, badgers and every sort of bird. It is normal to meet a man with a rifle or shotgun slung over his shoulder, a cartridge belt at his waist. Poaching is rife, and people pay no more attention to the sound of shots at night than do townsmen to the sound of a car starting up.

This was the excuse that Gaston Dominici gave for not going out to investigate the shooting in the early morning of August 5. It was a lie, but the explanation is a reasonable one.

In such country and among such people, Sir Jack Drummond and his family stopped their Hillman estate car at about seven o'clock on the evening of August 4, 1952. It has been asked why they pulled up here, on a dusty and much-frequented road. The question arose from a preposterous theory that Sir Jack had been a member of the wartime British Special Service and had returned to Lurs to investigate certain irregularities connected with the parachuting of arms and money; a story in which there is not a word of truth.

THE answer can only be that there is not another spot within miles which allowed the Drummonds to park their car a few yards off the highway. It is probable, too, that Elizabeth wanted to bathe in the river; her bathing costume, still damp, was found later in the car. Another reason might have been—ironically—the proximity of La Grande-Terre: the comforting presence of other human beings in a fairly deserted stretch of cliffs and woodlands.

Sir Jack's Hillman was parked off the road, facing towards La Grand-Terre, 150 yards to the south. From near the car, a path led through scrub and brambles to a small bridge across the railway line which runs parallel to the road. Beyond this bridge is the River Durance.

The night was calm, and a full moon gave near-daylight visibility. The inhabitants of La Grand-Terre knew that the foreigners were there. Old Gaston had passed them as he led home his herd of goats; his son, Gustave, had also seen them. And the Drummonds, carrying a canvas bucket, had been to the farm to ask for water. That they remained in the vicinity after this visit suggests that there was nothing in the Dominicis' attitude at that time to cause disquiet.

The next time any of the Dominicis—according to them—came into contact with the Drummonds was at 5 a.m. the next morning, when Gustave said that he found Elizabeth dead or dying at a spot between the railway bridge and the river. Gustave, explaining his presence there at such an early hour, told the police that he had come to inspect a landslip on the railway line caused by the over-watering of one of the Dominici lucerne fields, which overlooks the railway at that point.

IN fact, the landslip existed—it is perhaps the only thing which was not the subject of a lie—and the Dominicis were anxious about it; the derailment of a train through their negligence would obviously have been a very serious thing for the family.

The first gendarmes on the scene arrived by bicycle from Oraison, a town six miles away. They found the body of Lady Drummond, covered by a rug, lying near the car. She had been shot three times. On the other side of the main road, seventeen yards from the Hillman, was Sir Jack. His body, shot three times through the back and once through the right hand, was almost totally concealed by a camp bed; he was wearing blue pyjamas. This detail is important, for it could incriminate the young Roger Perrin, Gaston Dominici's grandson, who claims that he was nowhere near La Grand-Terre that night.

Important, too, was the large pool of blood found near a small concrete water point behind the car. Someone had bled here so copiously that the soil was impregnated for a depth of more than an inch. Yet this blood, because its presence did not square with Gaston Dominici's version of the crime, was never discussed at the trial.

The position of Elizabeth's body provided the most disturbing feature. How the child came to be lying where she was found was never satisfactorily explained; nor was the manner of her death. The conflict between the material evidence of how Elizabeth died, and the account given by Gaston of how he killed her, formed the weakest part of the case against the accused.

ELIZABETH was lying thirty yards from the railway bridge and twelve from the river. The path which led there from the Hillman is flinty, overgrown with thistles and sprinkled with dry thorns. "Even wearing sandals," said a witness at the trial, "anyone running down such a path would have his feet scratched." Yet Elizabeth's feet (she was barefooted) were clean and scratchless. The first doctor who examined her—at 9.15 in the morning—is uncompromising on this point: Elizabeth must have been carried down the path.

Dominici, in his statement, on which the case for the prosecution is entirely based, insists that the child ran away after he had killed her parents, and that he followed her. This was another piece of conflicting evidence which the prosecution practically ignored.

The prosecution, basing its case on the old man's confession, made no attempt to deal with the difficulties arising from the wounds on Elizabeth's head. The girl had been struck twice heavily with the butt of a rifle; a piece of the butt was found under her body. She had died, according to the doctor who first examined the bodies, at least three hours after her parents; that is, between four and five o'clock in the morning. Both her wounds, said the doctor, were mortal; but the second killed instantly.

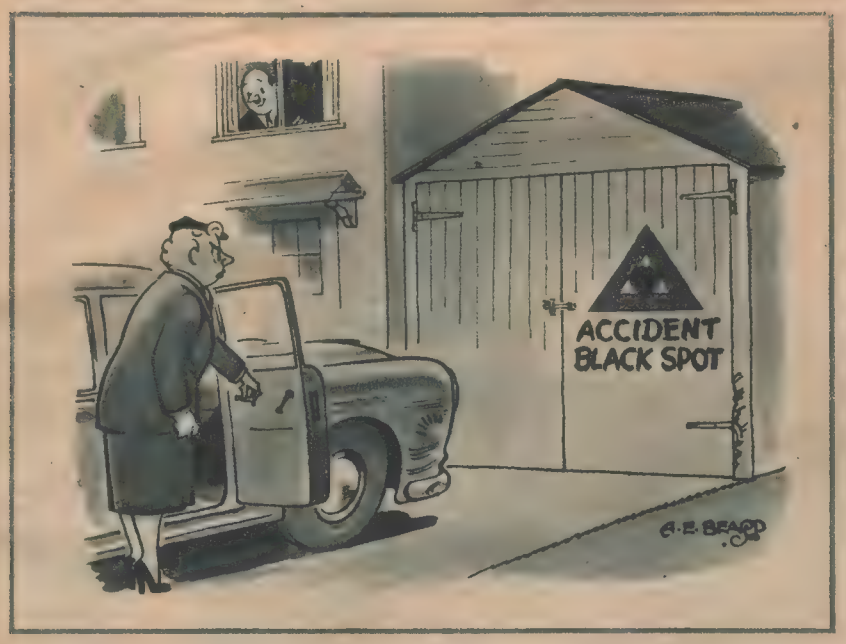
GUSTAVE DOMINICI, however, later admitted that the girl was still alive when he saw her at five o'clock: Elizabeth, he said, had moved an arm. This testimony poses two questions: did he see her before the second blow was struck, as the medical evidence seems to suggest; and if so, who struck that blow?

Gustave's version was accepted as the truth, for he was given a prison sentence of two months for "not helping a person in danger of death." But the troubling conclusions to be drawn from his version were never faced. The reason is clear. If they had been faced, the whole case against Gaston, *as the only person concerned in the murder*, would have been compromised.

To return to the scene of the crime. The police were severely criticized, both in France and in England, for the casual manner in which the preliminary investigations were conducted. Three hours after the discovery of the bodies, the place was crowded with onlookers. They were allowed to wander about at will. Tracks were obliterated. Hands touched the Hillman; dozens of people walked over the path down which Elizabeth was supposed to have fled.

Why, asked the critics, was the area not cordoned off immediately? Why did the detectives not arrive from Marseilles—only sixty miles away—till five o'clock in the afternoon, twelve hours after the first alarm? Why were strangers, including Gaston Dominici, allowed to enter the estate car? (The identity of the victims was not discovered by the police but by a journalist who, rummaging through the car's contents, found a suitcase bearing Sir Jack Drummond's name.)

Whatever the clues such laxity might have obliterated, Commissioner Sébeille, when he finally arrived from Marseilles, was confident that the



murderers or murderer came from the locality, and that the scene of the crime had been re-visited at least once after the killings. The camp bed covered the body of Sir Jack, the rug thrown over Lady Drummond, the disorder in and around the Hillman—all these facts pointed to a *mise en scène*, an attempt to make robbery appear to be the motive.

In fact, so far as can be known, nothing was missing but Elizabeth's shoes and slippers, and the canvas bucket which the tourists had taken to the farm the evening before.

The rifle which killed the Drummonds was picked out of the river not far from where Elizabeth had been found.

ARMED with this vital evidence, Commissioner Sébeille and his men entered La Grand-Terre.

Much has been made of the "wall of silence", which confronted the police from the beginning. In the event there was no wall of silence, but a wall of lies. Everyone talked; but every statement was either a lie or a half truth. Later, whenever a shred of truth emerged in the interminable inquiry, it was immediately swamped by a network of lies. "The family lie as they breathe," said a police witness. The phrase is banal, but it was the literal truth. Here is a fragment of dialogue between the President of the court and Roger Perrin, old Gaston's grandson.

Perrin (confronted with contradictions in his many statements): "All that I said was a lie."

President: "Why did you lie?"

Perrin: "I don't know."

President (after a further version from Perrin): "But this can't be true either!"

Perrin: "It isn't. I lied again."

President: "Why?"

Perrin: "I don't know. It's like that."

And Gustave Dominici declared, at the trial, as if it were the most natural thing in the world: "Everything I have said, all the time, everywhere, was a lie."

Some of the Dominicis' lies were gratuitous. There was no rhyme or reason, for instance, in Gaston's false claim that he found the piece of broken rifle butt under Elizabeth's body. Or in Roger Perrin's declaring that on the night of the murder he had visited a man who, it transpired, had been dead for six months.

But, in general, there was a strategy behind these lies. It was to put down such a layer of untruth that the simple outlines of the case became distorted and lost significance. Commissioner Sébeille was like a man frantically clearing snow from an almost recognizable face which more snow, continually falling, progressively obliterated.

Gaston, who, by circumstances and personality, soon became the central figure of the case, lied as heroically as anyone else. He has been presented alternately as a noble rustic elder, and as a tyrannical scoundrel. Witnesses who testified to his calm and sober personality were contradicted by others who swore that he thrashed his children, drank recklessly, chased after women and terrorized his wife.

The police, who have evidence that he drank five or six litres of wine a day, sum him up as a drunken brute, capable of anything. But observers who know Haute Provence say that Gaston is in no way exceptional, and that men of his mould are fairly common in the region.

WHAT cannot be common is his appearance; that, without question, is impressive. Dressed in his "Sunday best" with red muffler, decent suit and overcoat, his small eyes twinkling with placid malice from above the slender nose and flowing moustache, he might be on a poster advertising an agricultural show, or the model for that grand old peasant so well known to buyers of village postcards. This is the Gaston of the trial, the indignant patriarch who talked of the "honour of the Dominicis." The other Gaston is the tipsy, squalidly belligerent figure in corduroys and windbreaker ordering the police with upraised stick from his farm, or talking with obscene cynicism of the dead Drummonds.

Yet a third Gaston is the Vergilian goatherd, serene and simple, nursing his flocks through the wild, Provençal hills. None of these images corresponds to the reality; yet all touch reality somewhere.

Gaston Dominici is a formidable character. He was born of an unknown father and an Italian mother in the caretaker's lodge of the assize court at Digne, the very court in which he was

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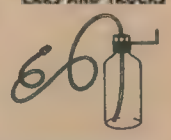

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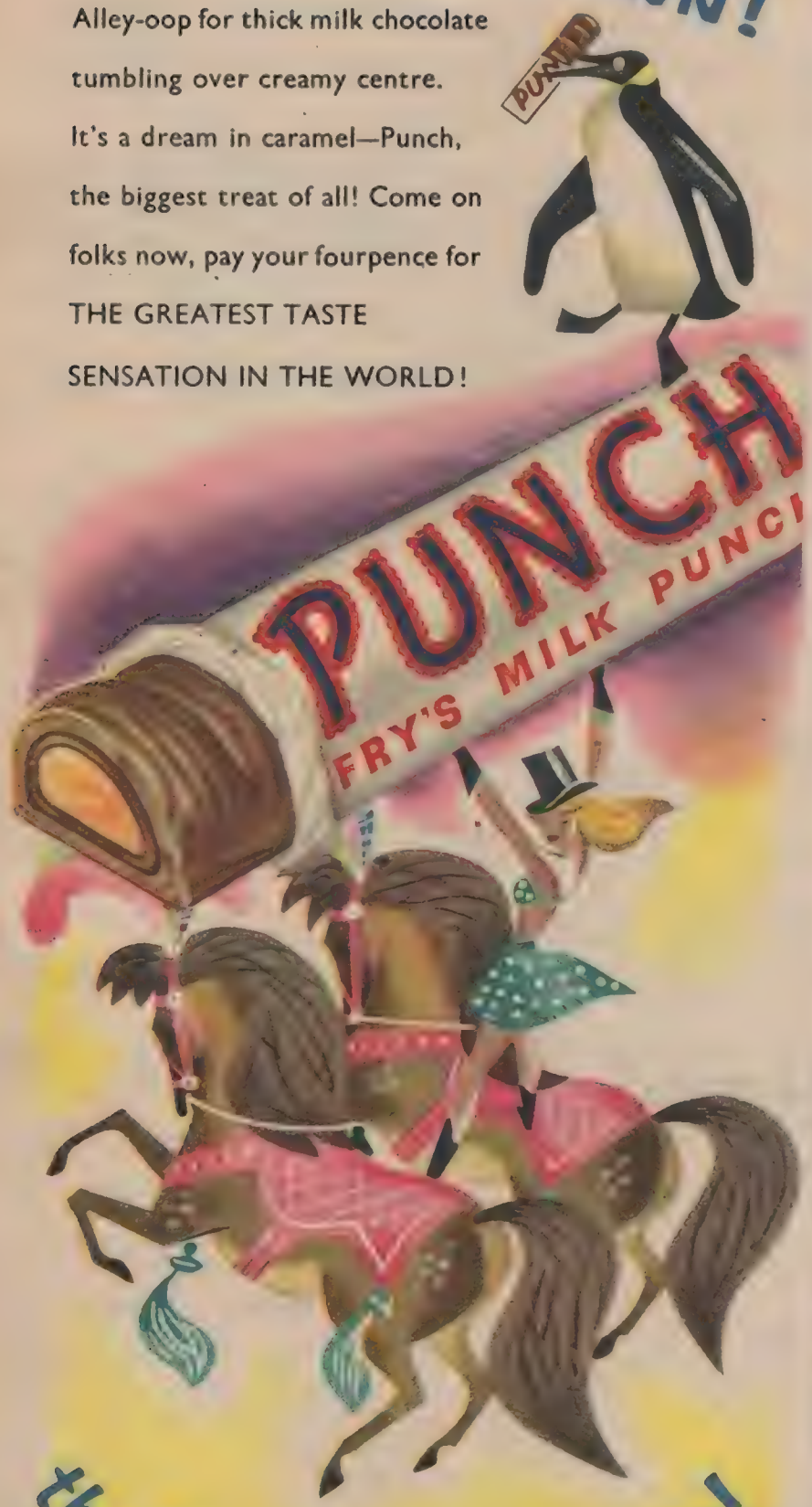

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tried for his life seventy-five years later. Gradually, by hard and lonely work as a shepherd and farm hand, he came down from the hills and attained the ambition of every man of his stock—he bought a farm and a few acres of soil where he was master of his land, his animals, his nine children and his wife. That, probably, is the order in which he would place them.

The main facets of Gaston's personality were best brought out by his replies to the president's questions at the trial. "You were a hard man?" the president suggested.

"Yes! And I still am. I always give blow for blow."

"Authoritative?"

"You bet! I never insulted anyone; I made sure nobody insulted me."

"You lived only for yourself?"

"I had to."

When a witness to character called him cunning, the old man was vastly flattered. "Cunning?" he beamed. "But that means that I'm not a fool!"

"You brought up your children strictly?" the president asked.

"Quite so," said Gaston. "It's bad to spoil children. I taught mine nothing but good principles."

It would be difficult to discover what principles he taught his younger son, Gustave. Gustave—"this poor thing" the prosecutor called him at the trial—was the weak vessel of the Dominici brood. A very powerful man physically but also shifty, uncertain, a coward, terrified of Gaston, terrified of his wife, terrified of his own shadow, he was blown before the changing winds of the inquiry like a straw.

He gave five versions of the events on the night of the murders, and retracted them all. He made a detailed accusation against his father, and retracted that. The only object of everything he said or did was to protect himself.

Gustave, the police feel, is the key to the whole enigma. If the truth ever comes out, it will come from him.

The Marseilles police could do nothing with him. He accused his father of the triple crime after he had been interrogated for twenty hours, but he only spoke because his wife ordered him to. Commissioners Gillard and Chenevier have had no more success with him than had Sébeille.

Gustave repeats what he has repeated for the last two years: "I lied when I accused my father. None of us knows anything about the killings." Everything Gustave said and did seemed to have been drummed into him by someone else; the police had the impression that he was speaking a prepared formula by rote.

The political climate round Lurs is strongly Communist.

A few hundred yards from the Dominici farm is the small railway station of Lurs, used now only for goods and coal traffic, but which is manned by a score of men. This exclusive, tough community is the core of the local Communist cell. The family are members of this; Gustave, especially, was very active in the cause. The chief of the cell is Paul Maillet, an intimate friend of the Dominicis.

During the war the *maquis* of Lurs played a prominent part in the Resistance; many arms and much equipment were parachuted into the area. The arms were not always used for attacking Germans. In 1943, and for two years afterwards, there was an outbreak of robbery, pillage and murder.

Some of the victims of these assassinations were *collaborateurs* with the enemy. Others died as a result of personal enmity, or were killed for gain. The marauding, trigger-happy *maquisards* were drawn from a comparatively small area, but people who lived through this period recall that the neighbourhood of La Grand-Terre enjoyed a particularly unhealthy reputation in this respect.

As in other parts of France after the war, investigations into the excesses of *maquisards*, in particular of Communist *maquisards*, were viewed with great misgiving by the parties of the French political left, and on more than one occasion such investigations led to showing up some prominent "popular" leaders in a very unfavourable light.

There were strong rumours in the district—and they still persist—that the Communist hierarchy was anxious about what might be revealed by its members in Lurs if the police were allowed a free hand.

The more Commissioner Sébeille could be confused in a maze of lies, the more the police might be discouraged from probing into the activities of the whole district. If all the witnesses blatantly lied, the police would probably distrust the truth even if they stumbled on to it.

Members high up in the Communist party are said to have visited the Dominicis and briefed them as to how they should proceed.

The police, once on the intervention of the examining magistrate at Digne and once on that of the Director of Public Prosecutions, were ordered to stop their interrogation of Dominici witnesses when it was taking a particularly favourable turn.

"The dice are loaded," said Commissioner Chenevier when he left Lurs, with his four hundred questions unasked, in March this year.

They were no less loaded when Sébeille and his inspectors were trying to squeeze the truth from Gustave and his wife, or when the President of the court, showing excessive caution, refused the defence permission to explore the many troubling undercurrents which run beneath the case.

"The real defendant is not Gaston Dominici," said a French newspaper at the time of the trial, "but the Communist Party."

NEXT WEEK: The facts about the night of the murders

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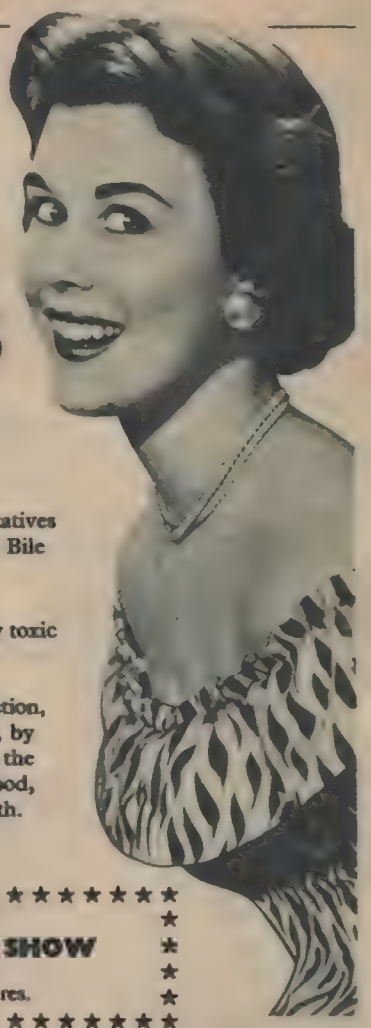

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ARTIST WITH A PALATE

Continued from page 25

Boulestin Restaurant, where he is paid less but is allowed to work in his own way.

Appropriately, his culinary feats are accomplished in a room that is twenty-five feet square, only about twice the size of the average home kitchen. His working quarters, however, are cramped with the usual restaurant kitchen equipment. There are three sinks and eight gas stoves, chopping and serving tables and a massive battery of copper pots and pans.

Joseph Barnett ("Mr. Joseph"), the manager, says that Bouvet likes to visit the dining-room, take in the quiet spectacle of people at the tables, and then return to the kitchen to impose the same decorum.

"He is everywhere," says one of the French porters. Bouvet, indeed, enjoys keeping an eye on everything, including the dining-room. He often forgets time when he is "talking" food. At three o'clock one afternoon, he mounted the stairs, went the rounds of the tables and settled down to talk with a noted gourmet who had invited him to have coffee and liqueurs.

Bouvet began to discourse on French regional dishes and the hundreds of varied spiced and potted meats whose recipes have been evolved differently in each of the provinces of France. He explained at length his dream of presenting on his menu one such recipe from every region.

Then, suddenly, the gourmet stood up. It was six o'clock. Bouvet, who had talked through his afternoon off, went happily to the kitchen.

The kitchen's proximity to Covent Garden is both a boon and a temptation. Bouvet can, and often does, find himself marching with determination between the crates of produce, searching out the first tender French runner beans, blithely unaware that he has brought a paring knife with him but no money.

He does the buying only when the impulse is overpowering. And sometimes he has to track down a rare herb by sniffing around the stalls because he cannot name it in English. His day usually begins at ten o'clock in the morning, when he inspects the meat and produce that the *maître d'hotel* has already bought. He goes home after midnight.

Sometimes, he sits down to eat. "But my appetite is not very great," he says. "The heat of the ovens kills it, and what hunger I have is sated by so much sampling. I don't think that I have eaten an average five-course meal since I was an apprentice twenty years ago."

Since there is no pre-cooking at the Boulestin, and dishes are ordered from an *à la carte* menu, even the most prosaic of them represents the skilled contributions of five men.

Thus, Bouvet never boasts of having cooked a *Steak au Poivre*, but prefers to say that it has been "achieved in the kitchen."

One typical evening, when a waiter gave an order for four *Steaks au Poivre*, repeating it for confirmation, the larder keeper disappeared into the coldroom. Bouvet put four tablespoons of melted butter and two of olive oil into a cast-iron frying pan. The sauce cook, standing by his own stove, poured half a cup of heavy veal stock into his saucepan and asked a porter for a quarter of a cup of dry white wine. The larder keeper emerged with four freshly cut sirloins and handed them to Bouvet on a board.

He sprinkled them with freshly ground, coarse black pepper which he pressed into each steak with the heel of his hand. He added a pinch of salt and quickly seared the steaks on both sides in the scalding butter and oil.

By this time, the blend of white wine and veal stock was bubbling briskly and beginning to reduce.

The porter handed Bouvet two ounces of cognac, which he dashed over the steaks and then ignited. A pale blue flame rose from the pan.

The sauce cook removed the sauce, which was reduced by one-third, and took it to the serving table to season. Then Bouvet called in a low voice: *"Attention, s'il vous plait . . ."* and reached the serving table with the steaks just as the flame went out.

The steaks were quickly placed on four hot plates while the sauce cook poured the sauce over them. Bouvet dipped a spoon into it, tasting the sauce for temperature, seasoning and texture. Everyone watched tensely.

"D'accord," said Bouvet, and the waiter took them upstairs. The whole operation had taken less than ten minutes.

"If we keep calm," says Bouvet, "the system never fails. If we get excited, someone loses his temper and a dish is spoiled. Then we try again."

For *Steak au Poivre*, a customer will pay 10s. 6d.; a three-course meal can be had for 30s.

Bouvet's rise in the culinary world has been anything but meteoric. When he left school at the age of fifteen, he had no doubts about what he wanted to do. "I wanted to be near food," he says. His first employer, the owner of the Hotel de l'Angleterre in Lyons, sent him to the vegetable corner.

"After several days, the vegetable cook passed me off on the larder keeper. I caught cold in the cold room and was sent to help the fish cook. In a short time, I had a thorough knowledge of the entire kitchen."

Bouvet admits that his even temper did not come naturally to him. Although always on the best of terms with his employers, he found reasons to leave each new job after about eighteen months. "I wanted to learn all I could in each place, then take my knowledge on again to compare it with the knowledge of other chefs."

He never reached Paris, but in less than fifteen years had learned, at first hand, the regional recipes of every province of France.

At thirty-three, his wide experience won him a post at the Savoy Hotel in London. He stayed there only eighteen months, however, and took a number of smaller London jobs in order to learn English cookery.

He is married to an Englishwoman. On his afternoon off, he doffs his chef's hat, goes home to his wife, who ties an apron around him, and begins cooking again. Systematically, he is teaching her all the recipes he knows.

"I cook a dish twice to show her," he says. "The third time, *she* cooks it. Usually, it's fine." THE END

What you should know about "Nerves"

Read these interesting facts about your "nerves", based on years of medical research and the experience of millions of people.

When you complain of feeling "run-down" your doctor will probably write the word "neurasthenia" on your medical card. This is a Greek word meaning nerve weakness. It may surprise you, when you complain of being easily tired, with no energy or inclination to tackle your daily tasks, that your doctor should diagnose this as *nervous* exhaustion. But doctors know that when your symptoms cannot be traced to any definite physical cause, then the root of your trouble must be "nerves".

But a "run-down" feeling is only one of the many symptoms of "nerves".

Watch for these symptoms

Worry. To worry continually is neither normal nor healthy, and can usually be traced to some nervous disturbance. If, then, you seem to worry more than other people, it is more than likely that your "nerves" are to blame.

Depression. Your whole outlook, as your doctor will tell you, is profoundly influenced by your nervous mechanism. If you are subject to long periods of depression, it is probably a sign that your "nerves" are at fault.

Irritability. In nearly every case of normally healthy people becoming excessively irritable and bad-tempered, the trouble can be traced to "nerves".

Sleeplessness. Sleeplessness is often the result of emotional stress or unconscious anxiety caused by nervous tension. Rid yourself of this tension, restore the normal equilibrium of your "nerves", and sound sleep should automatically follow.

The cause of "nerves"

We have already seen the effect of "nerves", now let us examine the all-important *cause*.

It's not just the "highly-strung" person who is prone to "nerves". Even an apparently placid person, at some time or other, experiences periods of nervous tension. When this happens, an exceptionally high demand is made on nervous energy, which in turn, reacts on the nerve cells. Now the efficient working of your nervous system depends upon the activity of these nerve cells. Unless they receive enough protein and phosphorus they "starve", retarding the normal growth of nervous tissue. To restore their health, they must be replenished with supplies of these two vital substances, protein and phosphorus.

How Sanatogen can help

Sanatogen is specially formulated to supply weakened nerve cells with the vital nourishment they need—large amounts of concentrated protein and essential phosphorus.

By giving this extra "boost", Sanatogen exerts a powerful influence on both your nervous and physical structure. It improves the whole fabric of your health, helps correct your "nerves" and restore your strength when you are "run-down", and gives you that feeling of well-being, confidence and tranquillity that is the mark of sound health and a stable nervous system.

Medically recommended

Sanatogen is fully recommended by the medical profession and widely used by doctors here and abroad.

Who uses this tonic?

Sanatogen is used by people of all ages, in every type of occupation; the housewife, the office or factory worker, to mention just a few. Medical evidence has shown that its strengthening properties are of *particular* benefit to the convalescent patient and the pregnant or nursing mother.

4 IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

Here are four important things that you should know about Sanatogen.

1. Sanatogen is recommended for *all* forms of "nerves"—excessive worrying, depression, sleeplessness, "run-down" conditions, irritability, lack of energy and indigestion.
2. Sanatogen not only helps to *overcome* "nerves" but assists in *keeping* your nervous system functioning efficiently.
3. Sanatogen is easily assimilated, and can be taken by people with the most delicate digestions.
4. Sanatogen has been recommended by doctors for over fifty years.

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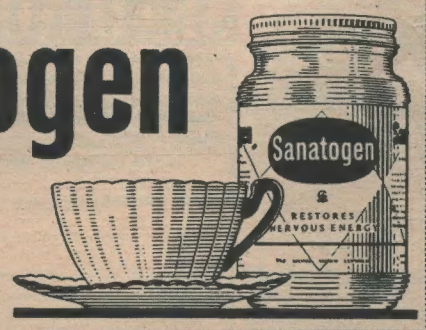

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"Same old stuff every year. When are they going to bring out something new?"

THIEF OF DIAMONDS

Continued from page 17

for you, Tio," he said. "I have something of great importance to discuss with you."

With his first sentence, Agnes had started to quiver; she murmured something about going back to her table, and vanished.

"Well, then, why don't we return together?" Tio suggested, as cheerfully as possible.

Amelia's mouth was a tight line. She said nothing on the drive home. Tio could not offer any explanation without telling Molina things that he didn't want the captain to know. Molina preferred to discuss his own proposal with Tio alone. The trip was, therefore, an unusually quiet one, relieved only by some desperate and desultory male remarks about the fishing off Mariel.

At the café, Amelia went upstairs. The men sat over a bottle and a glass behind the steel shutter.

"As I say, the president himself is disturbed about the theft of the diamond," Molina explained. "While not of importance compared to the millions——" The captain stopped and corrected himself: "That is to say, while a small thing in itself, still it is a blot on the administration. We have orders to find it promptly, and I thought you might help us."

"I, captain?"

"Yes. You have some good contacts in the underworld. Spread the word that unofficially we will give a reward for the diamond. And no questions asked. The stone could be given to you, and you could transmit it to us and collect the money. We'll make up some story for the newspapers."

Hope fluttered its wings in Tio's heart. "Well, I don't know," he said. "It was probably not a professional job. How much reward, captain?"

"Five hundred dollars."

Tio frowned. "I should think a thousand would be more effective, in view of the jewel's value and importance. But whatever you say."

"Make it a thousand, then."

"I'll see what I can do, captain. I'm not hopeful, but anyway, I'll get in touch with you in a day or two."

"Good!"

Tio went upstairs. Amelia was sitting up in bed, her lustrous black hair and rosy face ornamenting the pillow, her plump shoulders appealingly bare above the filmy nightgown. But her shoulders did not reflect her mood.

"So there were no girls connected with your night-time missions," she said scornfully.

"I am not responsible for Senator Corbo's guests," Tio replied with dignity.

"Suppose you tell me the whole story."

"That, as I explained to you, I am not at liberty to do, little flower. But I can tell you the results." He extended towards her the five one-hundred dollar bills. "For your plan of redecorating the café."

"Oh!" she said. "No, Tio, I do not wish to take your money."

He put the money on the bureau. "By the way," he remarked suddenly, "how did you and Molina know I was in the El Encanto?"

"We—we just took a chance."

"What you mean is, he took you there for a drink—and there I was."

"Well—partly that," she said, finding herself unexpectedly on the defensive. "He came here to find you. I was tired. He suggested I go for a ride to relax, while he looked for you. And I did need to relax. For three nights you've left me to do the work."

Tio looked at her, smiling, and she dropped her eyes.

"Here I was, working hard to earn the money you wanted," he declared, knowing he was out of danger now. "And in two or three days there will be another payment, and I'll have another five hundred dollars, for you."

"Oh, Tio! All for me?"

"The whole thousand for you."

Amelia clasped her hands. The spectacle of her rejoicing was so pure that Tio did not disturb it by mentioning that there would also be five hundred dollars for him.

"That's wonderful," she cried. "And I'm grateful. But that girl, Tio! Was she—did she mean anything to you?"

"Nothing. Less than an empty bottle on a pantry shelf."

"And me—do you love me, truly?"

"You, little flower! You are a trumpet blowing reveille over the sleeping camp of my desires."

Amelia threw back her dark head and laughed. "I hope I sound like a trumpet now," she said. THE END

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Voice Of The People
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Too Much Money
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Battling With Boredom
That Rent

Eating Up The Miles
Tripped Up
Traitor In The Camp

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

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RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

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(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, December 17, for early news of *Bullets* No. 2,016 result.)

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